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'WATERMAN OF INDIA' SLAMS INDORE TRAGEDY THAT KILLED 6

Water conservationist Rajendra Singh Sunday called the Indore drinking water tragedy a 'system-created disaster' which was avoidable

CORRUPTION HAS RUINED THE SYSTEM: SINGH

The Magsaysay Award winner expressed alarm that such a crisis could unfold in Indore, which has been ranked as India's cleanest city. "If such a tragedy can occur in the country's cleanest city, it shows how serious the condition of drinking water supply systems must be elsewhere," Singh said, alleging that corruption has ruined the entire system

AFTER INDORE, GANDHINAGAR SEES OUTBREAK

- Officially, the death toll in Indore was put at six so far. Locals, however, claim the fatality count could be anywhere between 10 and 14, with 200 more remaining in various hospitals
- After Indore, over 100 people have fallen sick with typhoid in Gujarat's Gandhinagar following water contamination

30

PATIENTS STILL IN ICU IN INDORE FOLLOWING THE DIARRHOEA OUTBREAK

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

India walks diplomatic tightrope on Venezuela, calls for dialogue

MEA terms the developments 'a matter of deep concern', but does not name the US

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

INDIA on Sunday expressed "deep concern" over the unprecedented US action to capture Venezuela's President Nicolás Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores in a late-night military operation.

In its first reaction to the dramatic US military action in Venezuelan capital Caracas early on Saturday, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said it is closely monitoring the evolving situation as the deposed Venezuelan leader has been brought to the US to face drug trafficking charges.

Calling for a peaceful resolution of all the issues through dialogue, the MEA said India reaffirms its support for the well-being and safety of the people of the oil-rich South American country. "We call upon all concerned to address issues peacefully through dialogue, ensuring peace and stability of the region."

The statement said the Indian embassy in Caracas is in contact with members of the Indian community and is providing all possible help. On Saturday, the MEA had issued an advisory urging Indian citizen to avoid non-essential travel to Venezuela.

In its carefully worded statement issued on Sunday, the MEA did not make any direct reference to alleged violations of sovereignty or name the US, adopting a measured tone amid rapidly unfolding events.

Screengrab of Nicolas Maduro (centre) escorted inside the headquarters of the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in lower Manhattan, New York | AFP

The MEA statement came a day after the Donald Trump administration announced that it had captured Maduro and his wife following a military operation that targeted Caracas as well as other areas. The operation was described by the US as part of a crackdown on what it called "narco-terrorism".

Washington launched the military action after putting pressure on Caracas for several months through a series of strikes on Venezuelan vessels accused of smuggling drugs. The latest developments marked a sharp escalation in the long-running political and diplomatic crisis surrounding Venezuela.

After he was 'arrested' by US forces in the audacious raid early Saturday, Maduro was brought to the US and is currently held in a New York detention centre. The deposed Venezuelan leader is facing drug trafficking charges and is likely to be produced in court on Monday.

While Trump said the US would oversee the administration of the country until a transition of power takes place, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in a television interview that Washington will use control of Venezuela's oil industry to force policy changes. He also did not rule out putting US troops in Venezuela. P9

STREETS EMPTY, SHOPS SHUT

Tense calm prevailed in Venezuela on Sunday with capital Caracas witnessing empty streets with few vehicles moving around. Most convenience stores, gas stations and other businesses were closed, in contrast to the rush usually seen on Sundays

U.S. LAWMAKERS QUESTION ACTION

US lawmakers have raised questions about the operation, done without congressional approval. "Trump is undermining Constitution's separation of powers," said Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, while Ro Khanna said Trump has set a dangerous precedent

RODRIGUEZ NAMED INTERIM PREZ

Venezuela's vice president, Delcy Rodriguez will be the acting president with the Supreme Court ordering her to take charge in Nicolas Maduro's absence. Terming the US action illegal, Rodriguez said Maduro is the country's rightful leader and must be freed

WILL PASS SPECIAL LAW TO CURB HONOUR KILLING, SAYS SIDDU

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah has proposed a special law to curb honour killing and plans to discuss it in the next session of the legislature.

Expressing displeasure over the recent murder of a pregnant woman in Hubballi by her father and uncles for marrying outside the caste, Siddaramaiah on Sunday shared on his 'X' account that an appropriate decision will be taken. He said a speedy trial will be ensured in the case related to the 'honour killing' of the young woman, Manya, from Inam Veerapur in Hubballi taluk. He stated that delivering justice to the victim is the government's top priority. The government will take steps to set up a fast-track court, he added.

The CM said that a case involving atrocities and murder against Dalits has been registered. "Since this is an atrocity case, the chargesheet must be filed within 60 days. Steps have been taken to appoint a special public prosecutor," he shared.

The CM said that forcing a girl into marriage against her will or killing her for refusing marriage, caste-based violence, assault and incidents such as honour killings are shameful and inhuman acts that make the entire human society bow its head in disgrace.

He claimed that a special law will be enacted to curb such incidents in the future and to create awareness among the public about the law.

A file photograph of Indian troops on patrol duty along LAC. The middle sector of LAC is in focus due to the unpredictable patrolling of China's PLA | EXPRESS

China on mind, army to up the ante along LAC's middle sector

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

THE Indian Army will conduct a major academic exercise on January 7 focussing on the Middle Sector of the Line of Actual Control with China, driven by growing concerns over Chinese assertiveness, enhanced infrastructure development across the border, and unpredictable People's Liberation Army patrol behaviour.

The seminar, titled "Fortifying Himalaya: A Proactive Military-Civil Fusion Strategy in Middle Sector," will be held in Dehradun, Uttarakhand, bringing together renowned experts, academia, and military leaders to explore civil-military integration redefining India's defence architecture.

Sources said the academic exercise aims to promote strategic thinking and understanding of civil-military fusion, providing a platform for academic exchange on frontier security.

Historically seen as less vulnerable than the Eastern and Western sectors, the Middle Sector has gained strategic importance in the wake of rising tensions and Chinese infrastructure expansion along LAC. The 545-km sector, spanning Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand borders, features unique challenges such as difficult terrain, limited infrastructure, environmental limits, and grey-zone activities.

"Chinese assertiveness is no longer limited to traditional military manoeuvres. We have witnessed infrastructure push in sensitive zones, dual-use facilities, increased PLA troop movement, aggressive patrolling patterns, cyber probing, and rapid militarisation of border villages," reads a synopsis of the seminar.

> **Our aim must be to transform the Middle Sector into an unshakeable logistics and surveillance backbone, capable of supporting fast response, deterrence, and long-term dominance**
>
> Seminar synopsis

The Middle Sector includes four valleys in Uttarakhand—Harshil, Mana, Niti, and Barahoti, with 22 passes serving as crucial mountain access points. Barahoti Valley remains among eight mutually accepted disputed areas with overlapping claims between India and China

Since May 2020, when China breached agreements, the sector's status has remained unclear, prompting major troop reorganisation.

The seminar comes as trust deficit between India and China persists despite recent disengagement at Depsang and Demchok in Eastern Ladakh.

Timely delivery of aircraft is key, says IAF chief

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

SPEAKING at the inauguration of 'Aeronautics 2047', a two-day national seminar organised by the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) at the Centre for Airborne Systems, Air Chief Marshal A P Singh on Sunday underlined the critical need for timely aircraft delivery to maintain the Air Force's operational readiness.

Congratulating ADA on completing 25 years of flight operations of Light Combat Aircraft Tejas, Air Chief Marshal Singh emphasised the need to stick to delivery timelines as essential for IAF readiness in a rapidly evolving security environment.

Dr Samir V Kamat, secretary, Department of Defence R&D and DRDO chairman,

said developing indigenous cutting-edge technology to reduce import dependence is the need of the hour to realise the goal of 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047.

The seminar saw the presence of domain experts, industrial partners, academia, and aviation enthusiasts from across the aerospace community to discuss aeronautics evolution, design innovation, manufacturing advances, and future frontiers.

Aeronautics-2047 will cover the future of Indian space technologies and the journey of LCA Tejas from sketch to squadron. ADA has designed and developed LCA Tejas with more than 5,600 successful flight trials. Several niche technologies like carbon composites, light-weight materials, fly-by-wire flight control, digital utility management system, Glass Cockpit, etc. were developed to make LCA a fourth-generation fighter.

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Govt to invest ₹1.5L crore to improve B'luru's infra: DKS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

PREDICTING that Bengaluru's population would double over the next 20 to 25 years, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar here on Sunday said the government has decided to invest Rs 1.5 lakh crore to address the city's infrastructure deficiencies.

At the 40th anniversary of BBUL Jain Vidyalaya of the Shri Mahaveer Jain Education Society and the 25th anniversary of CB Bhandari Jain College, held at Palace Grounds, Shivakumar said the city's infrastructure must be transformed. "Everyone here needs personal vehicles for commuting and hardly anyone uses public transport. With a population of 1.4 crore, the city has 1.3 crore vehicles, leading to severe traffic congestion," observed Shivakumar, also Bengaluru development minister.

After taking the responsibility of Bengaluru, Shivakumar said he has prioritised investment in infrastructure and claimed that despite traffic congestion, no one is willing to leave Bengaluru.

DCM D K Shivakumar at the 40th anniversary programme of BBUL Jain Vidyalaya and the 25th anniversary of CB Bhandari Jain College in Bengaluru on Sunday | EXPRESS

He said Bengaluru is not just a Silicon City, but also a health city and is developing in every sector. "Bengaluru is an exceptional city with a strong culture and abundant opportunities for quality education. It has a very large human resource base. While California state in the US has 3.5 million engineers, Bengaluru alone has 2.5 million engineers. This is the city's strength," he remarked.

> **Everyone here needs personal vehicles for commuting and hardly anyone uses public transport**
>
> DK Shivakumar, Deputy CM

Rajya Sabha member Lehar Singh Siroya urged the Jain community students to stay away from social media and focus on rigorous study to progress academically.

JJ Nagar tense after stones thrown at Om Shakti devotees

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

TENSION gripped JJ Nagar on Sunday night after miscreants allegedly threw stones at Om Shakti devotees during a religious procession, leaving a 21-year-old woman with a serious head injury.

The incident occurred near the Om Shakti temple at VS Garden in Jagjivanram (JJ) Nagar at 8.10 pm, when devotees were performing rituals as part of the procession.

Following the incident, hundreds of devotees gathered outside the JJ Nagar police station and protested, demanding the immediate arrest of those responsible. Two platoons of the Karnataka State Reserve Police Force (KSRP) were deployed in the area to prevent any untoward incident and to maintain law and order.

The injured woman's father said stones were thrown from the opposite side of the temple. He claimed that the attackers could not be identified as it was dark. The police, however, said the claims are being verified.

The devotees said the incident hurt their religious sentiments. Heavy police bandobast has been deployed at the spot of the incident as well as in and around the police station. P5

Bangladesh refuse to travel to India for T20 World Cup

GOMESH S @ Cape Town

A day after Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) released Bangladesh seamer Mustafizur Rahman from the IPL squad at the instruction of BCCI, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has formally written to the ICC to relocate their T20 World Cup matches from India. While the BCCI remains silent on the matter at the moment, if things don't get sorted amicably, the entire World Cup schedule might have to be changed.

Bangladesh, who are scheduled to play three matches in Kolkata and Mumbai, have now officially refused to travel to India amidst the rising diplomatic tensions between the two countries. Following an emergency board meeting on Saturday night, BCB said as much in a statement. "The Board reviewed the situation in detail, taking into account developments over the last 24 hours and expressed deep concern over the overall circumstances surrounding the participation of the Bangladesh National Team in matches scheduled to be played in India.

Mustafizur Rahman

Following a thorough assessment of the prevailing situation and the growing concerns regarding the safety and security of the Bangladesh contingent in India and considering the advice from the Bangladesh Government, the Board of Directors resolved that the Bangladesh National Team will not travel to India for the tournament under the current conditions," the statement read.

BCB went on to say that the step was necessary for the safety and well-being of the players and officials from the country. "In light of this decision, the BCB has formally requested the International Cricket Council (ICC), as the event authority, to consider relocating all of Bangladesh's matches to a venue outside India. The Bangladesh Cricket Board looks forward to the ICC's understanding of the situation and an urgent response on this matter," the statement added.

Since the political turmoil in Bangladesh last year, the cricketing relations between two countries have not been smooth. India men's tour of Bangladesh was postponed last August and as late as December 2025, the Bangladesh women's tour of India was indefinitely postponed.

EXPRESS READ

Ballari clash: Govt may hand over case to CID

Bengaluru: Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara on Sunday said the government is considering handing over the Ballari violence case to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) | P4

Yellapur murder accused found hanging in forest

Yellapur: The man who stabbed to death a woman was found hanging from a tree in a forest near Yellapur on Sunday. The BJP and Hindu forums have alleged love jihad in Saturday's murder | P4

ALMANAC TODAY

- **Monday:** 05.01.2026 • **Year:** Vishwavasu • **Ayana:** Dakhsinayana
- **Ritu:** Himanth • **Masa:** Pausa • **Paksha:** Krishna • **Tithi:** Dwitheeya 12.37 pm
- **Nakshatra:** Pushyami 4.31 pm • Moon in Simha Rashi • **Rahukaala:** 07:30 am to 09:00 am
- **Gulikakala:** 01:30 pm to 03:00 pm • **Yamaganda:** 10:30 am to 12:00 pm

WEATHER

MIN 14°C | MAX 26°C

FORECAST
Mostly cloudy

Sunrise 06.43 am
Sunset 06.06 pm
Moonrise 08.14 pm
Moonset 08.24 am

Robotic probe to check water contamination at Lingarajapuram

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

BANGALORE Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) suspended water supply and launched an intensive probe using robotic technology on Sunday following reports of frequent illness and food poisoning-like symptoms for over a week, allegedly due to contaminated water supplied to the residents of Lingarajapuram in Bengaluru North.

According to BWSSB, water supply to parts of Lingarajapuram was stopped after reports of contamination as a precautionary measure to safeguard public health. To identify the source of contamination with precision and speed, the Board has initiated an investigation using advanced robots along with dedicated ground staff. "We are using every technological resource available to trace the fault line without digging up the entire area blindly", BWSSB Chairman Ram Prasath Manohar said. Terming the issue a top priority, BWSSB has directed its engineering teams to identify and rectify the problem and restore normal water supply by Monday evening. "There will be no compromise on the timeline," Manohar added. To avoid inconvenience to residents, the Board has deployed 'Sanchari Kaveri' mobile tankers to supply free potable water to affected households and avoid water scarcity during the repair period.

Local health officials said there has been no 'epidemic outbreak'; however, cases of fever and food poisoning-like symptoms have been reported. Following multiple complaints and the suspension of water supply, health officials will conduct a health survey in the affected area on Monday to assess the impact of the contamination. Residents have been urged to cooperate with officials during the inspection and repair work and to utilise the tanker services until the piped water supply is fully restored.

Kogilu evictees and members of various civil society groups take a pledge at the public meeting on Sunday | EXPRESS

Kogilu evictees oppose BJP's B'deshi branding

Say saffron leaders attempting to derail state govt's decision to rehabilitate them

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

AMID growing uncertainty over rehabilitation of residents of Fakeer Colony in Kogilu near Yelahanka, various progressive organisations and residents held a public meeting opposing the statements by BJP leaders branding the displaced residents as "Bangladeshis".

They demanded that alternative accommodation be provided to the evictees or they be granted permission to erect temporary shelters on the contentious site, and food and health facilities should be made available as per the order from the Human Rights Commission.

The public meeting, which began with the reading of the Preamble of the constitution, was organised under the banner of the newly formed Kogilu Slum Residents Struggle Committee here on Sunday, on the 16th day of demolition of homes by the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA).

Representatives from Dalit organisations, All India Janavadi Mahila Sanghathane, Dudiyuva Janara Vedike, National Federation of Indian Women, Left parties, including CPI and CPM, Islamic student groups, and civil society organisations participated and addressed the gathering.

The speakers strongly condemned what they termed the "politics of stigmatisation", alleging that BJP leaders were attempting to derail the Congress government's decision to rehabilitate the affected families by portraying them as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh.

"The residents were living there for years. Even if the land belonged to the government, they were not homeless until the demolition made them so," Nandini, a representative from Dhudiyuva Janara Vedike, said.

The organisers clarified that they were not opposed to housing being provided to other eligible beneficiaries but demanded that the Kogilu residents be rehabilitated immediately, as promised by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Housing Minister B Z Zameer Ahmed.

With summer approaching and families spending over two weeks without shelter, the speakers stressed that rehabilitation must be treated as an emergency. Listing multiple issues, the residents said they are not able to cook their own food, some of them are suffering from health issues and their children are not able to attend schools. They called on the government to act without further delay and warned against politicising the issue.

The residents gave an ultimatum of two days to the state government to provide them with alternate arrangements, or they would plan protests.

CITY SEEKS 'FAIR TRIAL'

'Do or Die' protest against dog pick-ups

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

MORE than 400 citizens gathered at Freedom Park, Bengaluru on Sunday, demanding the Supreme Court for a 'fair trial' against the 'state-sanctioned cruelty' towards community animals. Protesters included families and children, who reinforced at least 50 cities across India for the Do or Die protests triggered by large-scale dog pick-ups, prolonged confinement in poorly equipped shelters, and alleged violations of the Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules.

As part of the protest, activists announced the launch of WatchDogs, a citizen-led initiative aimed at monitoring illegal dog pick-ups and cruelty cases, and intervening through legal action, including filing complaints and FIRs. Protesters also called for the formation of an oversight committee comprising police officials, animal welfare volunteers and Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) representatives to ensure lawful and humane implementation of animal welfare measures.

South Bengaluru Cares members and volunteers protest against 'state-sanctioned cruelty' towards community animals, at Freedom Park on Sunday | SHASHIDHAR BYRAPPA

Shelter homes owners alleged that ABC shelters were being pressured to accept dogs from what they described as 'fake bite cases'. "Shelters are overcrowded, yet healthy dogs, including puppies, are being confined in unhygienic conditions. In Gauribidanur, 70 dogs were found caged inside a waste management plant without food or water," shared Vikash A Bafna, Founder Trustee of Friends for Animal Trust, adding that despite documented cases, legal action remained absent. "We are being asked to 'manage somehow' without space, staff or funds. That is not animal welfare; it is institutionalised cruelty carried out under official instructions," said Radha Amarnath, Founder, Asra Animal Welfare Organisation.

Animal lovers questioned the state's financial priorities, citing government estimates of Rs 575 crore for dog caging alone. "ABC costs a fraction and is proven to work. What problem is being solved, and with whose money?" questioned Sathwik Putta, a member of South Bengaluru Cares.

Grievances? Call Central City Chief today

Commissioner Rajendra Cholan will personally hear the grievances and issue immediate directions to the concerned officials for resolution of the issues. Bengaluru Central City Corporation (BCCC) has called upon citizens of the corporation to directly call the Commissioner and submit their grievances through a phone-in programme scheduled from 6 pm to 7 pm on Monday. Citizens can dial the telephone 080-22975803 and register their complaints to get them resolved. People can submit grievances related to potholes and road repair works, maintenance of street lights, garbage collection, cutting and removal of dry or risky trees/branches, maintenance of parks, issues related to e-Khata, removal of unauthorized banners, maintenance of footpaths, encroachment removal, cleaning of drains and other civic amenities provided by BCCC. **ENS**

ECO ISSUES TAKE CENTRESTAGE AT 23rd CHITRA SANTHE

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah inaugurated the 23rd edition of Chitra Santhe on Sunday, and revealed the state government's plan to to improve the green cover by planting 3-5 crore saplings every year. Chitra Santhe, organised by Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath (CKP), transforms the streets into open-air art festivals. CM underscored the urgency of environmental protection at this year's edition, themed as "Environmental Challenges through Art". Addressing artists and visitors, the CM said, "Art is a mirror of a state's culture, and today it must also reflect our responsibility towards nature", calling on citizens to view art as a catalyst for environmental awareness.

Siddaramaiah, participating the eighth time, praised CKP for consistently providing a vibrant platform where artists and art lovers can come together to exhibit, buy and celebrate art. CKP President B L Shankar said this year's theme reflects the growing need to engage the public on ecological issues through creative expression. In collaboration with the Vanalok Foundation, a special nature-themed exhibition focusing on Bengaluru's urban environment is being hosted. The exhibition traces the city's ancient landscapes and traditional water systems, highlighting the importance of green spaces.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah gets his portrait during the inauguration of Chitra Santhe at Chitrakala Parishath on Sunday | EXPRESS

Nineteen-year-old Anvita Sunil from Kerala, presented oil-painted portraits inspired by people she photographed on the streets, said it was the largest platform she has ever been a part of.

Kariyappa Hanchinamani, an artist with 22 years of experience, showcased a vibrant music-inspired series rendered in acrylic on canvas, S.A. Vimalanathan, a 45-year-old artist with 25 years of practice, presented mixed-media works capturing Bengaluru as polluted, crowded and chaotic in his modern representation of the city.

Safety of kids: Residents protest proposed liquor shop

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

HUNDREDS of residents of ECC Road in Whitefield on Sunday staged a flash protest against a proposed liquor shop in what they describe as a purely residential locality, alleging collusion between excise officials and the shop applicant.

Residents, including women and children, gathered in large numbers holding placards and raising slogans, opposing permission for the outlet. The protest saw participation from residents of Prithvi Layout, Umiya Woods, Prestige Boulevard, Citilights Rustique and Gopalan Atlantis – communities located directly around the building where the liquor shop is proposed.

Residents stage a flash protest on ECC Road in Whitefield on Sunday

The protesters expressed serious concern over safety and law & order, pointing out that ECC Road is used daily by thousands of schoolchildren and families visiting a nearby temple. They said the proposed outlet is close to residential apartments, a school, places of worship, including a temple, church and mosque, making it unsuitable for a liquor store. Residents also alleged that the building in question is illegal.

The agitation follows developments over two public hearings conducted by the excise department. Condemning what they term collusive conduct by excise officials, residents asserted they would continue their protest against the liquor shop and other illegal commercial activities in the neighbourhood.

Bangalore Golf Club marks 150 yrs with new logo, launches BGL 6.0

Bengaluru: Bangalore Golf Club (BGC), one of the city's oldest sporting institutions, on Saturday formally commenced its 150th year celebrations with the unveiling of a special logo and the inauguration of the Bangalore Golf League (BGL 6.0). Established in 1876, BGC holds the distinction of being the oldest golf course outside the British Isles. The newly unveiled 150th year logo symbolises the club's long legacy of sporting excellence, tradition and camaraderie, while setting the tone for a year-long series of commemorative events marking the historic milestone. The launch event was led by Ravikumar Raju, captain, BGC, and managing committee of the club and brought together members to reflect on BGC's past and evolving present. The evening also marked the inauguration of the sixth edition of the Bangalore Golf League, one of BGC's flagship tournaments. Over the years, BGL has grown into a landmark event on the club calendar and promotor of competitive golf. **ENS**

Horoscopes By Holiday

HOLIDAY MATHIS

05th January : Drama Moon This dramatic Leo moon offers a chance to look at the tendency to catastrophize. Sometimes we wrongly interpret discomfort as danger. We say the unfamiliar is "scary" when it's just new. Pressure feels like pain, and inconvenience feels like crisis. Today's challenge is to scale feelings to the size you can handle, and to remember you don't have to handle it alone.

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr. 20)
Your success formula couldn't be simpler: Stick close to people who live the way you want to live, and you'll pick up their magic by osmosis. The vibes mesh, the momentum builds, and everyone gets a lift.

TAURUS (Apr. 20 - May 20)
When is confidence too much? When it makes people certain without demanding any evidence -- or ignoring evidence to the contrary -- of the assertion. It is better to be underconfident than to be certain of something that isn't true.

GEMINI (May 21 - June 21)
Welcome it all -- even the stuff you wouldn't choose. It's how you stay in conversation with reality instead of wrestling it. Resistance narrows your view; acceptance opens it. Bonus: Acceptance feels a lot better, too.

CANCER (June 22 - July 22)
You might be tempted to act out of spite. Check the emotional price tag. Spite is expensive. You pay twice: once in energy, once in fallout. Choose something that feels good now (SET ITAL)and(END ITAL) later. It's more powerful to play the long game.

LEO (July 23 - Aug. 22)
You can tell your taste is changing because new things suddenly appeal to you. You're willing to be a little adventurous with a fresh pursuit, and it's thrilling to feel the pull of something you didn't even know existed until now.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22)
When someone confuses you, don't try to parse the details, because the answer won't be there. Instead of zooming in, step back. Relationships will only reveal their logic at a distance. What are the human needs driving the action?

LIBRA (Sept. 23 - Oct. 23)
Are the minutes and hours you've spent in fantasyland a waste? Your creativity is boundless. A little fantasy is fun. A lot of fantasy leads to unreasonable ideas and stratospheric possibilities that no one else would come up with.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 21)
The schedule is tight, but your vibe doesn't have to be. Keep your pace even and your pulse low. The rule of cool? Everything looks cooler in slow motion. Even if you feel a bit hectic on the inside, don't rush.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21)
When you say yes, things begin to happen. You'll end up in plans you never would have dreamed up alone, and they'll carry you into unexpected adventures. But that's all later. For today, all you have to do is say yes.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19)
History is full of examples of people doing things that made no sense on paper. So the fact that a goal is unreasonable doesn't automatically make it unattainable, which you will prove with today's astonishing outcome.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18)
You may have a bit of help, but you're the one keeping everything on track today, which is why you feel a bit of pressure. You're leading from within the ranks, and though you're not the figurehead this time, none of it would get done without you.

PISCES (Feb. 19 - Mar 20)
The orange seed looks like the lemon seed, and both resemble the grapefruit seed. You can't tell the fruit from the seed, and today's project is similarly mysterious. These are early days. You won't know the color of it until things ripen.

Solutions to Saturday's puzzle ⬇

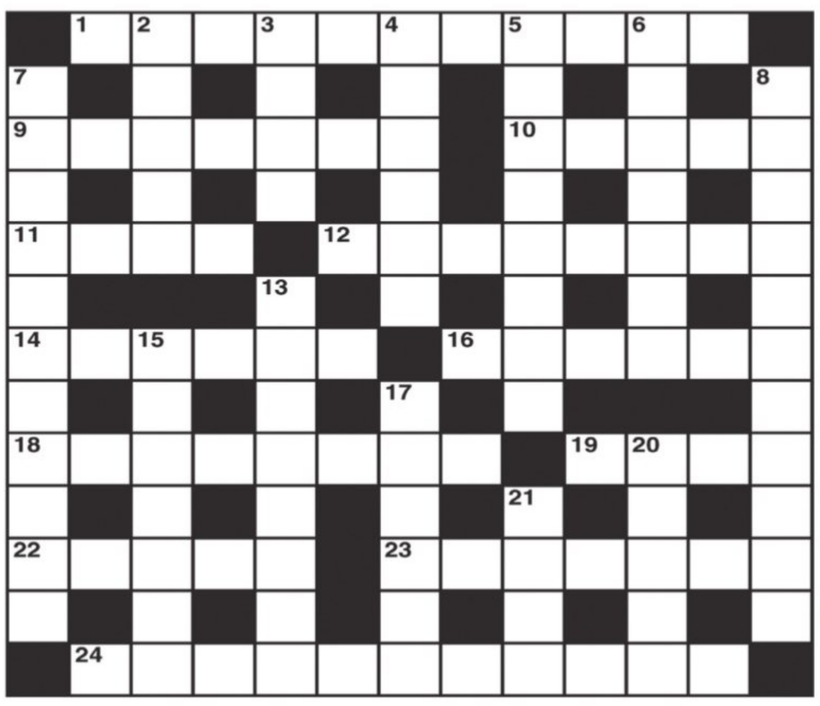
	1		5	4			7	2
4		3	1	2				5
	8		9			1		3
					6	7		
		4		9		2		
		6	4					
8		5			9		2	
3				1	5	6		9
9	2			8	4		5	

4	6	7	5	8	3	9	1	2
1	8	9	4	7	2	6	5	3
3	5	2	6	9	1	7	8	4
6	1	5	3	2	9	8	4	7
7	2	4	8	1	6	3	9	5
9	3	8	7	4	5	1	2	6
5	4	3	9	6	8	2	7	1
8	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
2	9	6	1	5	7	4	3	8

SUDOKU EASY

TEST YOUR NUMBER CRUNCHING SKILL WITH OUR UNIQUE PUZZLE

Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3X3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



CROSS WORD

ACROSS

1 His work has an inflationary effect on the product (5,6)
9 Squeeze out just one more cent (7)
10 Proper illustration reveals the inherent risk (5)
11 Its driver has a duty to take one (4)
12 Working has to beat not working (2,6)
14 For each expert a pastry dish is brought in (6)
16 The Astor's new cooks (6)
18 The sort of alibi which has not been forged (4-4)
19 Islamic ruler confined in Moslem Iraq (4)
22 Invite approval during the day before Christmas (5)
23 Firm purpose to settle (7)
24 Be confident; sleep is guaranteed (4,7)

DOWN

2 Rubber solution obtained dead on ten (5)
3 Impressive way to complete a business document (4)
4 Bay - and yet not bay perhaps (6)
5 Going the rounds? (2,6)
6 Wager is about insects (7)
7 Trial marriages work for cricketers (4,7)
8 Quick course for British journalists (5,6)
13 Mishap caused by stress - I'd go into it (8)
15 Available to customers, or about to arrive (2,5)
17 Where rackets may be exposed (6)
20 Shelter with me in an affray (5)
21 Use a different name for Jacob's twin brother (4)

SATURDAY'S SOLUTIONS

Across: 1 Handle, 4 Layabout, 9 Leaden, 10 Observed, 12 Tote, 13 Linen, 14 Peru, 17 Wedding rings, 20 Comes to light, 23 Deaf, 24 Bigot, 25 John, 28 Proceeds, 29 Marina, 30 Sunshade, 31 Stayed.

Down: 1 Hill town, 2 Neap tide, 3 Leek, 5 Abbreviation, 6 Abed, 7 On view, 8 Tedium, 11 Single-minded, 15 Pivot, 16 Agile, 18 Ignominy, 19 Standard, 21 Adapts, 22 Lagoon, 26 Mesh, 27 Last.

JUMBLE

UNSCRAMBLE THESE JUMBLES, ONE LETTER TO EACH SQUARE, TO FORM FOUR ORDINARY WORDS.

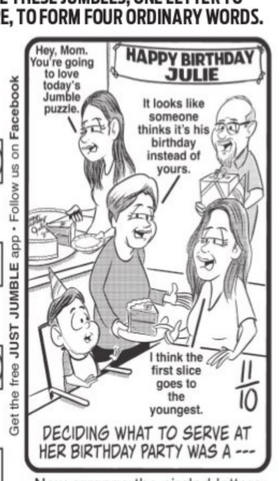
BY DAVID L. HOYT AND JEFF KNUREK

KLCFO

CEREH

FWLFEA

LPCIYO


Hey, Mom. You're going to love today's Jumble puzzle.
HAPPY BIRTHDAY JULIE
It looks like someone thinks it's his birthday instead of yours.
I think the first slice goes to the youngest.
11/10
DECIDING WHAT TO SERVE AT HER BIRTHDAY PARTY WAS A ---

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: MOUSE OPERA ENOUGH GOSSIP
Answer: When it came to being a lead singer, Diana Ross was — SUPREME

Medical Education and Skill Development Minister Dr Sharanaprakash R Patil has advised all doctors, officers and staff working under the Medical Education Department to compulsorily enrol for term insurance, following a recent lapse that led to a reduced insurance payout to the family of late IAS officer Mahantesh Bilagi

Record organ donations in state in '25: Health dept

GAYATHRI M KURUP
@Bengaluru

KARNATAKA recorded 198 organ donations in 2025, the highest in the state's history and an increase from 178 donations in 2023. While the rise places the state third nationally after Tamil Nadu and Telangana, health experts say the improvement remains modest and highlights deeper systemic gaps.

Principal Secretary, Health and Family Welfare Department, Harsh Gupta, described the increase as incremental. "The improvement is just more than 10 per cent. There is progress, but a lot more remains to be done. There is still a large untapped pool of potential donors, especially in major government hospitals that handle trauma and neurological cases," he said.

Officials said the growth was driven by structural changes in the transplant ecosystem. "We increased the number of transplant centres, expedited hospital renewals and expanded organ retrieval centres. Cross-matching laboratories were established in Mangaluru, Hubballi and Mysuru, reducing delays and avoiding the need to transport samples to Bengaluru," the official said. The state has also procured a new software platform aimed at improving transparency, allocation efficiency and real-time communication between donor and recipient hospitals from this year.

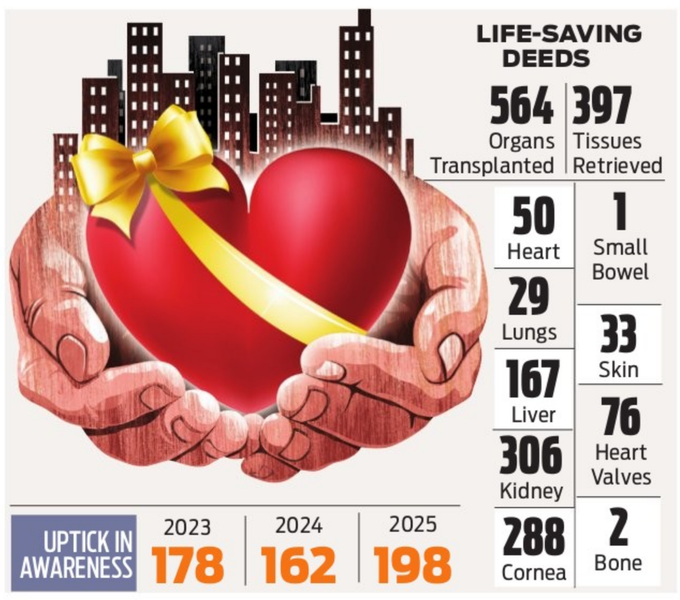
Surgeons involved in public-sector transplants say public confidence in organ donation has improved gradually over the past decade. Dr Nagesh NS, gastroenterologist and director of the Institute of Gastroenterology and Organ Transplant (IGOT), Bengaluru, said the introduction of transplants in government hospitals helped normalise the process.

"When Victoria Hospital began transplants in 2016 and later with the setting up of IGOT under a public-private partnership, people saw that such procedures were being carried out within the public health system," he said. According to him, consistent outcomes, along with the involvement of NGOs, zonal coordination and sustained administrative support, contributed to greater acceptance over time.

However, transplant specialists caution that donation activity remains concentrated in a few urban centres. Dr Mahesh Gopashetty, HOD & Senior Consultant – Liver Transplant & HPB Surgeon at Sparsh Hospital, said Karnataka is "nowhere close" to ideal donation rates per million population. "Most donations come from cities like Bengaluru, Mysuru, Hubballi-Dharwad and Belagavi. Contributions from large parts of the state are negligible," he said.

Dr Shetty pointed to logistical challenges in using organs from remote districts. "Connectivity is a major issue. Even when there is consent, time constraints, long distances and the family's need to complete last rites quickly sometimes make it impossible to utilise organs," he said. He also flagged gaps in awareness across communities and among healthcare professionals. "Even today, not all doctors fully understand brain death or how to medically maintain an organ donor. That expertise is not available in every district hospital."

Experts agree that expanding retrieval centres to all medical college hospitals, strengthening counselling teams, improving connectivity and training doctors across disciplines will be critical. "We have come a long way in the last 10–15 years," Dr Shetty said. "The acceptance is better now, but these numbers can and must improve significantly," he added.



Interstate fake invoice racket of ₹1.4K cr busted

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

THE Commercial Taxes Department Enforcement Wing (South Zone) has busted a massive interstate fake invoice racket involving Rs 1,464 crore, and arrested four persons in connection with the case. Officials informed that two brothers from Tamil Nadu, Irbaz Ahmed and Nafiz Ahmed, who floated several fake firms including Trion Traders, Wonder Traders, Royal Traders and Galaxy Enterprises, were arrested from Pernampattu. Two others identified as Eddala Pratap and Revathi, who had created shell entities such as Power Steel and Cement, PR Construction, SV Traders and SRS Cement Steel Traders, were arrested from Bengaluru.

According to a press release, the accused generated fraudulent inward and outward supply transactions using forged and fabricated documents, resulting in the wrongful availment and transfer of Input Tax Credit (ITC) without any actual movement of goods. The racket involved commodities such as cement, iron and steel, and other building materials, and operated across Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Thanks to a tipoff, Enforcement Wing conducted successful coordinated searches and seizure operations simultaneously at multiple locations in Bengaluru, Chennai, Vellore and Pernampattu. During the raids, officials confiscated 24 mobile phones, 51 SIM cards, two pen drives, bank statements and several rubber stamps belonging to different business entities.

All four accused were produced before the Special Court for Economic Offences, Bengaluru and remanded them in the to judicial custody.

EXPRESS READ

2 held for abusive content against Darshan's wife

Bengaluru: The Cyber Crime Police has arrested two more for allegedly sending derogatory messages against Vijayalakshmi on various social media platforms. The accused have been identified as Nagaraj Gullappa Talwar (23), a petrol bunk manager from Keshavpur, Hubballi, and Prashanth Talwar (23), an auditor from Dharwad. Earlier, a software engineer, Nithin and an autorickshaw driver, Chandrashekar B were arrested. Vijayalakshmi, wife of arrested actor Darshan, had filed a complaint for allegedly posting obscenecomments, and sending abusive messages against her and family on social media platforms.

PUBLIC DISSENT

Members of the Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist) protest against the US military attack on Venezuela and the alleged kidnapping of the country's President Nicolás Maduro at Freedom Park, in Bengaluru on Sunday | SHASHIDHAR BYRAPPA

SHORT-CIRCUIT

Smoke kills 34-yr-old techie while sleeping

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

A 34-year-old software engineer died of suffocation after a fire broke out at her apartment in Subramanya Layout in the Ramamurthy Nagar police station limits on Saturday night. The deceased, Sharmila (34), was a native of the Dakshina Kannada district. She was working at a software company in Bellandur. According to the police, Sharmila was alone as her roommate had gone to her native place. The fire reportedly broke out late at night due to an electrical short circuit while Sharmila was asleep.

When she woke up, Sharmila was unable to exit the apartment. Neighbours noticed the smoke and alerted the fire department. Fire personnel found Sharmila lying on the floor and suspected that she had died due to suffocation, the police said.

Infant rescued amid alleged human sacrifice

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

AN eight-month-old baby boy, who was allegedly illegally adopted, was rescued by the Bengaluru Rural District Child Protection Unit and the police following a complaint that he was being prepared for human sacrifice as part of a ritual to unearth hidden treasure.

The incident occurred in Janata Colony of Sulibele village in Hoskote taluk on Saturday afternoon. According to the police, the 1930 Child Helpline received a call alerting authorities that the infant was in danger. Acting on the information, teams from the DCPU under the Department of Women and Child Development, along with Sulibele police, conducted a raid at the residence of Syed Imran (40), a vegetable vendor.

During the inspection, officials found a pit dug inside one of the rooms of the house. Ritual materials were also recovered from the spot, raising suspicion, the police said.

Investigators further stated that Imran had allegedly adopted the child from a family in Kolar without any legal documentation. In view of the suspected unlawful adoption and allegations of human sacrifice, the DCPU took custody of the child. A senior police officer said Imran claimed he had adopted the child as he already has two daughters. He also stated that a burrow had earlier existed at the dug-up site and that pujas had been performed there over the past two years.

RAIL WHEEL FACTORY
YELAHANKA, BENGALURU- 560064
Phone:080-28072706

TENDER NOTICE
NO.RWF/S/146/2025-26/12 Dated: 30.12.2025

On behalf of the President of India, The Principal Chief Materials Manager invites electronic tender for the following work through the website http://www.ireps.gov.in from experienced/ reputed contractors in the field.

Tender No: RWFSWORKS_ERC1st Slab_25-26 **Distance Slab:** 0-500Kms (with a minimum chargeable distance of 100Kms), **Qty.:** 3600MT **Estimated Cost:** Rs. 1,56,06,000.00 **EMD** Rs. Rs. 2,28,000.00 Due Date & Time: 20/01/2026 at 14.15 Hrs

Tender No: RWFSTPT_CWD_1stslab_25-26 **Distance Slab:** 0 (Zero) to 500Kms **Qty.:** 11,900MT **Estimated Cost:** Rs. 2,75,48,500.00 **EMD** Rs. 2,87,800.00 Due Date & Time: 02/02/2026 at 14.15 Hrs

For Scope of Work & Special Note please refer RWF and IREPS website.

Contract Period: Minimum 12 (Twelve) months from the date of issue of Letter of Acceptance

PRINCIPAL CHIEF MATERIALS MANAGER

IN THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL -II, AT BANGALORE

O.A. No.810/2019

Between: Union Bank of India, Akshayanagar Branch, Bangalore, Rep. by its Branch Manager. **...Applicant**

And

1. M/s. Srinidhi Manufacturers Rep by its Managing Partner B. S. Suma, No. 96, Nananjundaiah Layout, Beguru, Bangalore.

2. K. S. Nagesh S/o. Sreenivasaiah,

3. R. S. Shobha, W/o. Sheshagiri

4. B. S. Satisha @ Satish S/o. Sreekantaiah,

All R/at No. 201/B, 1st Floor, 15th Cross, 6th Main, BTM 2nd Stage, Bangalore. **...Defendants**

SUMMONS ISSUED TO DEFENDANTS 1 to 4 UNDER RULE 23(VIII) OF THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEDURE RULES) 1993,

WHEREAS, the Applicant has instituted an Application U/S 19 of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks under Financial Institutions Act, 1993 against you for recovery of a sum of **Rs.18,53,944/-** (Rupees Eighteen Lakhs Fifty Three Thousand Nine Hundred and Forty Four Only) as on 28.07.2018 along with current and future interest at 10.25% p a. compounded and other relieves. You are required to show cause within 30 days from the date of publication or **on 06.02.2026 at 10.30 a.m.**, in person or by a Pleader/ Advocate duly instructed as to why the reliefs prayed for should not be granted. Take notice that in default of your appearance on the above mentioned day, the proceedings will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this **03.01.2026**

Sd/- Registrar
Debts Recovery Tribunal-II
Bangalore

LIC HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED
1st Floor, Jeevan Managal Building, Hayes Road, Bangalore -560025. Ph.: 080-43003651

DEMAND NOTICE

NOTICE ISSUED UNDER SEC 13 (2) OF "THE SECURITIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIALASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002.

The following persons whose names are mentioned in Col No.2, The details of properties mortgaged are shown in Col No.5. The borrower has defaulted in repaying the amounts due by them as shown in Col. No.4, in spite of repeated remainders, consequently these dues have been classified as NPA's as per RBI's guidelines. Notices were sent by Regd. Post to below mention date and that is returned / undelivered. Therefore, the respective borrowers are hereby called upon to repay the outstanding amounts due mentioned against their names in Col No.2 within 60 days from the date of this publication, failing which LIC Housing Finance Ltd., would be constrained to initiate proceedings under sec.13 (4) of SARFAESI Act against the mortgaged properties mentioned hereunder against the respective loan A/cs to realize the amounts due to them.

The borrower attention is also invited as per Section 13(8) of the SARFAESI Act, the right of redemption of the secured assets will be available to them only till date of publication of Sale Notice.

Sl. No.	Name of the Borrower & Loan No	Demand Notice Date	Notice Amount (in Rupees)	Description of the Property
1.	MS. SUMITHA RENUKAPPA Loan A/c No. 4001010003387	12/12/2025	Rs. 6831856.00	SCHEDULE PROPERTY : All the piece and parcel of the residential Property bearing No.50, BBMP Katha No.706, E-Aasthi P.I.D No.No.2093875859, formed in old Survey No.52, New Converted Survey No.52/6, vide conversion Order No.A.L.N(N)(Y)SR/32/2014-15, dated 30-06-2014, order issued by the Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District, Bangalore situated at Abbigere Village, presently known as "SAPTHAGIRI LAKE VIEW ENCLAVE", Yeshwanthapura Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, presently comes under the limits of Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagar Palike Ward No.12, Bangalore, measuring an extent of East to West: 37-0 (Thirty Seven) Feet, North to South: 25-0 (Twenty Five) feet, in all measuring 925 Sq. Feet , along with 25 Squares R.C.C Roofed building, Ground plus 3 upper floors, with Granite Flooring, Honne Wood used for Doors and Windows, with all civic amenities and bounded on: East : Road, West : Private Property North : Private Property South : Site No.51
2.	MR. VAMSHI MUTHYALA MR. SREERAMULU MUTHYALA Loan A/c No. 410200005878	17/12/2025	Rs. 2494529.00	SCHEDULE PROPERTY : (Description of whole Property where the Project Scheme is located) All that piece and parcel of the immovable property bearing Site No.40, Katha Sl No. BDA/RO/N/40/2016-17, Sy No. 134/7 (K C Krishna Reddy Layout), converted from agricultural purpose to Non-Agricultural purpose, vide official memorandum Dated : 21.12.2011, bearing No. ALN(E.B.B)S R/132/2011-12, ISSUED BY Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District, Bangalore situated at Kithiganur Village, Bidrahalli Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, measuring East to West 15.24 meter (50 feet) and North to South 7.28 meter (23.8 feet), totally measuring 110.947 sq mtrs (1194 sq ft) and bounded on : East by : Site No.39, West by : Road, North by : Site No.41,South by : CA Site
3.	MR. H R RAVISHEKAR MS. DAKSHAYINI M S Loan A/c No.4002160000567	18/12/2025	Rs. 3677393.00	SCHEDULE PROPERTY : All the piece and parcel of the immovable property bearing Site No.14, Old Katha No. 14/47/2/VS, 14, New Municipal Katha Sl.No.14, Nagarasabha Katha No.47/2/VS.14, measuring East to West: 40 feet and North to South: 30 feet, in all total measuring 1200 Sq. Feet and situated at Veerabhadranapalya Village, Doddaballapur Town, Bangalore Rural District, Ward No. 2 (Old) and New Ward No.10, and bounded on the : East by: Road, West by: Site No.3, North by: Site No.15, South by: Site No.13

Place : Bangalore
Date: 05.01.2026

Sd/- Authorized Officer
LIC Housing Finance Limited

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XPRESS FOCUS

"We don't manufacture drama; survival creates it"

Founded in 2022, EIPK Production House has steadily positioned itself as a launchpad for innovative and fresh content in India's evolving entertainment landscape. Co-founded by **Yashodhara N (Vikram -- story, screenplay, dailouge writer, and director)** and **Parthasarathy Vinod Kumar,** the company blends creative instinct with entrepreneurial precision. This dynamic duo - Vikram, a multi-faceted Kannada filmmaker, and Vinod Kumar, a techie-turned-serial entrepreneur - are betting on a young, nationwide audience hungry for original, rooted, and regional storytelling.

After making their mark with Business House, an entrepreneur-pitch reality show on Zee Kannada News, EIPK is gearing up to launch Jungle Boogie, India's first Survivor-style reality show spanning five states, along with Catch and Watch, an OTT platform curating regional content dubbed across Indian languages. Both ventures are slated for January 2026.

Vikram and Vinod Kumar speak about their journey, creative philosophy, and why Jungle Boogie could redefine Indian reality television.

EIPK Production House brings together two very different professional journeys. What sparked this partnership?

Vinod Kumar: I come from a technology background. I was working as a cybersecurity expert at Cisco when I first met Vikram during an ad shoot. Vikram has spent decades in the Kannada film industry and has an instinctive understanding of storytelling and production. During that shoot, we travelled together, spoke at length, and realised we shared a common vision.

Yashodhara : Vinod brings structure, technology, and scalability to ideas. I bring creative intuition and industry experience. That balance is what defines EIPK Production House.

Since 2022, EIPK has been described as a "launchpad" for fresh content. What does that mean in practice?

Yashodhara : For us, it means creating real opportunities. Not just talking about fresh talent, but backing them with budgets, platforms, and visibility. Whether it's acting, filmmaking, music, writing, or creative development, we are actively scouting and nurturing new voices.

Vinod Kumar: Every project we design has a measurable outcome -- a new actor introduced, a new filmmaker launched, or a new storytelling format explored. Our flagship pan-India project *Kabootar* is a good example. It brings together diverse cultural flavours, a fresh cast, and new-age storytelling.

Jungle Boogie is being positioned as a game-changer. What makes it different from existing reality shows?

Yashodhara : Most reality shows today are driven by conflict, manufactured drama, and TRP formulas. *Jungle Boogie* is fundamentally different. It is about survival, culture, and self-discovery. It asks a simple but powerful question: How would today's youth survive if stripped of modern comforts and placed back in nature?

Vinod Kumar: The core lesson of Jungle Boogie can be summed up in two words: Life is a challenge. Face it. That philosophy runs through the show.

How does Jungle Boogie blend adventure, survival, and cultural storytelling?

Vinod Kumar: We are taking participants deep into a forest location near Shivamogga, where they must survive for 90 days, 24x7, with no external support. They are not given accommodation or modern tools. They must rely on nature to meet their basic needs.

But this is not just about endurance. We weave in Indian cultural knowledge -- traditional farming practices, Ayurveda, home remedies, and sustainable living. The idea is to show how earlier generations lived balanced, peaceful lives using nature wisely.

Yashodhara : Without culture, there is no India. Through Jungle Boogie, we want young viewers to reconnect with that truth.

Who can participate, and what does the format look like?

Vinod Kumar: Each team will have 12 participants, aged 18 to 27. They are ordinary people -- not celebrities. Physical and mental fitness is essential, and health checks are conducted regularly, including BP and sugar levels. There will be five regional teams, mentored by well-known figures from different industries. The winning team takes home Rs 80 lakh.

Yashodhara : Celebrities will appear intermittently, but only as visitors or mentors. This is not a celebrity-driven show. In fact, celebrities cannot survive these conditions -- that's the point.

Reality shows often rely on drama. Will Jungle Boogie still engage audiences?

Yashodhara : Absolutely. Conflict arises naturally when survival is real. Hunger, exhaustion, leadership, fear -- these are powerful human emotions. We don't need artificial drama.

Vinod Kumar: Audiences today are smarter. They want authenticity. Jungle Boogie offers raw, unscripted human behaviour in a setting Indian television has never attempted before.

Where will Jungle Boogie be broadcast?

Vinod Kumar: We are in advanced discussions with major networks like Zee and Colors. A pilot has already been prepared. The show will not premiere on our OTT platform initially, as it deserves a wide television audience first.

Alongside this, you're also launching Catch and Watch. What gap does it address?

Vinod Kumar: India has extraordinary talent, but very few platforms that truly highlight regional storytelling. Catch and Watch is designed to showcase unique Indian stories and dub them across regional languages -- including lesser-represented ones like Konkani and Bengali.

To participate, contact:
info@jungleboogie.club or call 9886666147
info@businesshouse.com or call 9844500081

PWD Minister Satish Jarkiholi reiterated that he was not in the race for the chief minister's post and that any decision on leadership changes would be taken by the party high command in New Delhi after the state budget. "I play cricket well. In politics, you must bowl a googly at times. Otherwise, you won't succeed. Let's see when the opportunity comes," he said

TIME TO WOO DOMESTIC TOURISTS, AND HARD SELL INDIA ABROAD

TOURISM

ROHIT HANGAL
(Co-founder and director, Sphere Travelmedia & Exhibition Pvt Ltd)

STARTING Point 2026

AS we embark on a fresh start to orient our tourism fortunes it is important to recall what transpired in 2025. The beginning of the year saw the country on a record-breaking spree. With the Maha Kumbh Mela held from January 13 to February 26 drawing over 66 crore pilgrims over 45 days marking the biggest congregation of people for a single event. The bigger takeaway in my view was the employment it generated; both in the temporary sector to the more formal ones. Today, Uttar Pradesh, which hardly had a travel agent eco-system apart from the one at Agra, has a buzzing network of travel agents, guides, home-stays and hotels catering to the religious travel domain.

As the year rolled on, foreign arrivals slowly inched towards pre-Covid levels. With a mere Rs. 3 crore earmarked for international marketing, amid closing of all our international tourism offices is tough.

The Incredible India campaign needs a reboot, and the ministry will do well to bring in the heft of being a 4 trillion-dollar economy! India Tourism has to increase its marketing footprint across different global markets and it cannot happen on a 'Atma Nirbhar' mode. Inbound tourism is heavily relationship-driven and takes years to nurture travel partners across the world. Out of sight is out of mind; surely!

Domestic tourism continues to be the mainstay for the travel and tourism sector. Leisure hotels, which were once were chasing international tourists, today has found the humble domestic holidaymaker more discerning and remunerative. With a fine-line dividing key holiday seasons, most holiday destinations in India are today season agnostic!

Globally, there have been several instances, where leading global destinations have taken initiatives to encourage domestic travel and get their citizens to spend their money within their borders. Some interesting marketing campaigns by such as the one by Tourism Australia which created the No Leave, No Life campaign to encourage workers to take their annual leave and see their country. Australians have been brilliant in creating campaigns to capture the hearts of locals hoping more Aussies choosing to holiday in their own backyard. New Zealand for instance still considers domestic tourists as their mainstay and make up about two thirds of the tourism industry.

If marriages are 'made in heaven' and bills are being paid on earth, it is a no-brainer that what goes around in between is the 'traversing hell' part of the deal! The scale and spectacle of the recent Ambani wedding just proved that. Destination weddings have also pushed hotel rates to a new high, which the inbound players now find themselves to be the preliminary collateral damage!

The Indian hospitality sector this year marked entry of several international and new desi Indian brands making a beeline. With over 1,00,000 rooms in the 3-5 star being added in the next five years, the market for branded hotels has heated up. With brands targeting Tier-2, Tier-3 and even Tier-4 cities for leave their footprint, the time has never been so good for the employment market. For hotel brands, investing on brand-building is almost like an after-thought and will do so, only on gun-point. Though Indian hotel brands have been a late starter in the hotel-branding enterprise, but it is never too late to elevate your game in what might just be the world's second fastest growing hotel market!

The Indian aviation industry never seems to be on a dull mode with a last couple of weeks adding to the drama. India being the world's third largest domestic aviation market handling 241 million passengers, with nearly 800 aircrafts and with now having 163 airports needs to get on to steroid mode. China in comparison has nearly 3,500 aircrafts serving over 730 million passengers and over 25 airlines. Do we need more competition in the skies? It is a big yes, indeed!

As someone once said "In a country where every mile tells a story, Indian tourism is not just moving people—it is about creating memories, while the tourism economy quietly checks in!"

GOVT MULLS HANDING OVER BALLARI VIOLENCE CASE TO CID, SAYS Dr G

'I have instructed officials to submit report, and process is currently under way'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

HOME Minister Dr G Parameshwara on Sunday said the state government is considering handing over the Ballari violence case to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID). "There is a strong possibility of doing so. I will speak to the chief minister in this regard," he told reporters here.

Parameshwara said firearms have been seized and sent for examination. "The ADGP has informed me that the bullet was fired from a private firearm, not police arms. A ballistic expert will determine from which firearm the bullet was fired. I have instructed the officials to submit their report, and the process is currently under way," he said.

Asked about the BJP demanding to arrest the culprit, the home minister said this has to be done under law. "It can be done only after an investigation. This is the procedure," he said.

On MLA Janardhana Reddy writing to the government for Z security, Parameshwara said he has not received the letter yet. "We will take suitable action after investigation."

Parameshwara said such a law and order situation happened only after Reddy entered Ballari. "This could be a coincidence, we do not know. We are investigating this as well," he said. On Ballari Superintendent of Police Pavan Nejjur, who was suspended after the clash on charges of dereliction of duty, the HM said he is in Bengaluru now. He was hurt after the incident as he was transferred, Parameshwara said.

The clash erupted on January 1 evening when supporters of Congress Ballari City MLA Nara Bharath Reddy attempted to erect banners for unveiling of a Valmiki statue, near Janardhana Reddy's Havambavi home, which his supporters opposed, leading to stone throwing and gunfire and the death of a Congress worker.

The police seized five firearms from two gunmen. A case was registered against 11 people, including Janardhan Reddy, his brother Somashekar Reddy and former minister B Sriramulu.

Ballari violence 'small incident', probe will unearth truth: Jarkiholi

Shivamogga: PWD Minister Satish Jarkiholi on Sunday termed the Ballari violence "a very small incident" that should not have happened. He said lapses in management had led to suspensions and that accountability would be fixed only after a police investigation. Jarkiholi said the situation there is now under control. "Only after the police inquiry will it be clear who is at fault," he said, adding that there had been discussions on ordering a CID probe into the incident. **ENS**

Zameer has put SP's post up for bids, govt hushing up Nejjur's suicide attempt: Shobha

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

UNION Minister of State for Labour and Employment and MSME Shobha Karandlaje here on Sunday alleged that IPS officer and suspended Ballari Superintendent of Police Pavan Nejjur attempted suicide, but the Congress state government is holding back his death note, which mentions the names of two top officials.

She alleged that Nejjur is the victim of Ballari district incharge minister Zameer Ahmed Khan, also housing minister, who had put the SP's post up for bids.

Addressing the media at the state BJP office, she said the government pressured Nejjur's father Udayashankar to issue a press statement, claiming that his son did not attempt suicide. "Why Pavan Nejjur tried to kill himself? Why did you suspend him, even though he had taken charge as Ballari SP just two hours before the violence? How much did Zameer ask for that posting? Did you feel it was less or were planning to post a new officer? Why did you not suspend the DySP and inspector who worked at the behest of Congress MLA Bharath Reddy," she asked the government.

She wanted to know where Nejjur has been for the last couple of days and claimed she has information that he tried to kill himself after he was humiliated with a suspension by his higher-ups. But the home department hushed it up, she alleged.

"The death note should be made public as I have information that the names of two top officers are mentioned in it. The top brass sent a Bengaluru DCP to the resort near Tumakuru where Nejjur was staying. As Nejjur had consumed an overdose of sleeping pills, an enema was done at a private hospital. Whenever the Siddaramaiah government comes to power, officers face highhandedness. Victimisation of officers should stop and the government should respond to Nejjur's suspension. How many should get victimised?" she thundered.

"When the unpleasant incident took place in Ballari, it was being reported live that Pavan Nejjur was at the spot, but the government lies that he was not there," she said.

"Was it right for the Chief Minister to sit with Bharath Reddy against whom an FIR was filed," she asked.

She said corruption in recruitment, promotion and transfer should come out. "Our police system has a good name, but the Congress government is tarnishing it," she said.

"Our officials have to struggle for 11 months to collect the bribe they paid for the posting. After 11 months, they should be at it again. Like signing an 11-month contract for renting a house, officers too are forced into the trap of bidding for posts. What is the share that goes to the in-charge minister, chief minister, minister and MLA? People and officials are fed up with it," she lambasted.

She wondered whether Siddaramaiah met officers and listened to their grievances.

Union Minister of State Shobha Karandlaje addresses the media at the BJP head office in Bengaluru on Sunday | EXPRESS

Whenever the Siddaramaiah government comes to power, officers face highhandedness. Victimisation of officers should stop and the government should respond to Nejjur's suspension. How many should get victimised? — Shobha Karandlaje, Union Minister of State

HEALTH

Karnataka must adopt patient-first approach, public–private partnership

Dr (PROF) VIVEK JAWALI,
Chairman, Cardiac Sciences, Fortis Hospitals, Bengaluru

KARNATAKA has long been one of India's most progressive states in healthcare —home to premier medical institutions, a strong private sector, and a thriving innovation ecosystem.

Yet, as we move into 2026, the expectations of citizens are changing. People no longer ask only for treatment. They expect faster access, predictable outcomes, financial protection and humane care across urban and rural settings alike. In cardiac sciences especially, minutes matter — and systems matter even more.

The most urgent need in 2026 is a statewide time-bound emergency care network for heart attacks and strokes. Karnataka must scale a "hub-and-spoke" model that connects ambulances, peripheral hospitals, and tertiary centres through standard protocols. When a patient has a STEMI (major heart attack), the system should trigger an automatic pathway: ECG in the ambulance or first

contact point, immediate teleconsultation, direct transfer to the nearest cath lab, and documented door-to-balloon timelines. The goal is simple: reduce avoidable deaths by ensuring every patient — whether in Bengaluru or Bidar — reaches definitive treatment in time.

Second, we need a strong prevention-first strategy, because the greatest cardiac burden is increasingly driven by lifestyle disease and late detection. Karnataka should institutionalise community screening for hypertension, diabetes, obesity, and high cholesterol through PHCs, workplace health programs, and urban health centres. Preventive cardiology must become routine —like vaccination — supported by counselling on tobacco cessation, nutrition, and physical activity. This cannot remain a once-a-year "health camp" effort. It must be a continuous public health program with measurable targets.

Third, 2026 must be the year of strengthening critical care capacity and workforce. Beds and equipment are important, but trained people are the real infrastructure. Karnataka should expand structured training for emergency physicians, critical care nurses, perfusionists, cath lab technicians, and paramedics — especially in tier-2 and tier-3 cities. A state-supported framework for Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) training, periodic recertification, and simulation-based skill development would significantly improve survival after cardiac arrest and complications after major procedures.

Fourth, Karnataka must accelerate digital integration and data-driven governance. We need interoperable electronic records across public facilities, and practical digital tools for triage, referrals, and follow-ups. Equally important is a robust set of clinical registries — heart attack, heart failure, cardiac surgery outcomes — so we can identify gaps, compare performance, and improve quality. "What gets measured gets improved." Transparent reporting of key quality indicators, coupled with supportive improvement programs (not punitive action), can elevate standards across the state.

Fifth, we must address the biggest silent crisis: out-of-pocket expenditure and delayed care due to financial anxiety. In 2026, Karnataka should strengthen insurance coverage for emergencies and high-cost interventions, streamline approvals, and reduce paperwork at the point of care. Timely treatment should never be hostage to delays in authorisation. Financial counselling desks, standardised package rates for common cardiac procedures, and partnerships that expand coverage in underserved districts will directly translate into lives saved.

Finally, Karnataka should adopt a pragmatic, patient-first approach to public–private collaboration. The private sector can complement the public system through training, referral networks, capacity support during surges, and shared protocols for emergencies — while the government ensures equity, affordability, and accountability. Such partnerships should be built around outcomes: time to treatment, complication rates, and patient satisfaction — not only volumes.

Healthcare in 2026 must be judged by a simple question: Did we reduce preventable deaths and disability, and did we make care easier to access and afford? Karnataka has the talent, technology, and intent. What we need now is execution at scale — with urgency, transparency, and a system that places the patient at the centre of every pathway. If we commit to these reforms, Karnataka can become not just a leader in facilities, but a leader in outcomes.

VB-G RAM G rectifies MGNREGA flaws, says Joshi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Hubballi

UNION Minister Pralhad Joshi slammed the Congress for misleading daily-wage workers in the state by "spreading misinformation" and "false propaganda" regarding the VB-G RAM G and accused the state government of deliberately telling lies about the scheme.

He said transforming the MGNREGA scheme into a 'Vikasit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Akeevika Mission (Gramin)' is being politicised by opposition parties, which clearly reflects their narrow-mindedness. The opposition, unable to tolerate the transparent and effective introduction of the scheme, is spreading false narratives about it.

"Under the MGNERGA scheme, rural workers were earlier guaranteed employment for 100 days per year. This has now been increased to 125 days. As a result, rural people will receive greater employment opportunities along with enhanced income security. The daily wage has been increased to Rs 370, which will significantly benefit rural labourers," he said.

He stressed that village panchayats will continue to remain the central implementing agencies of the scheme. However, the Congress is trying to create fear among people by claiming that the central government will discontinue the scheme, he added.

Joshi said to support farmers during agricultural activities, an additional provision of 60 days of employment per year has been made available. Despite such measures, the state is opposing these initiatives and following anti-agriculture policies.

Earlier, the MGNREGA scheme was being misused. To prevent this, biometric technology was made mandatory. In order to reduce unnecessary expenditure and curb corruption, the cost-sharing ratio between the Centre and the states has been fixed at 60:40.

"From the government's administrative perspective, and to ensure transparency and effectiveness in the implementation of schemes over time, certain necessary reforms are essential in some programmes. The primary objective of these changes is to strengthen people's livelihoods through welfare measures and basic infrastructure development, and both must go hand in hand. One cannot exist without the other," he said.

As BJP raises love jihad spectre, Yellapur murder accused found hanging in forest

SUBHASH CHANDRA NS
@Yellapur (Uttara Kannada)

THE man who stabbed to death an assistant cook with the Yellapur Government School was found hanging from a tree inside a forest near the town on Sunday. The murder that took place on Saturday has taken political overtones with the opposition BJP and Hindu organisations alleging love jihad.

The victim, Ranjitha Bonsade, a 31-year-old mother of a child from Kalammanagar area in Yellapur town, was stabbed to death by Rafique, who was from the same locality, on Saturday. She had been separated from her husband and was living with her parents for the last 10 years. It is said that Rafique was pestering Ranjitha to get married to him, but she had refused repeatedly. On Saturday, while she was returning home, Rafiq accosted her on the road and again proposed marriage to her. When she refused, he pulled out a knife and stabbed her in the neck.

Even as she lay wreathing in pain, the local residents tried to get an ambulance, but could not. An autorickshaw driver, Chandrashekar Bovi Vaddar, who is Ranjitha's neighbour, saw her struggling for life and shifted her to a hospital, where she died. The police, who were searching for the accused, arrived with the canine squad and the dogs led them inside the forest where Rafique was found hanging. Soon after the incident, the town turned tense with BJP and Hindu organisations alleging love jihad.

BJP state president BY Vijayendra visited the victim's family on Sunday and announced a compensation of Rs 5 lakh. Later talking to the media, Vijayendra said he will take care of the education of Ranjita's 10-year-old son. "People have still not forgotten Neha Hiremath's murder in Hubballi and this incident has occurred. Such crimes are recurring as Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara and others in the government are appeasing the minorities," he alleged.

He said that the government announced Rs 25 lakh to the family of a Congress worker in Ballari soon after he was killed by a bullet injury, while no such help has been extended to the relatives of Ranjitha.

Members of Dalit organisations stage a protest in front of KIMS Hubbali on Sunday

Police warn against rise in AI-morphed explicit images

DHIYA VEER @Bengaluru

AMID growing concerns over the misuse of artificial intelligence to generate explicit and morphed images using real-life photographs, the Bengaluru City Police have cautioned citizens against the rising threat of AI-enabled cybercrimes.

The warning comes against the backdrop of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) reportedly writing to AI platform Grok, directing it to conduct a review and seek clarification regarding the misuse of its tools to generate obscene and explicit content.

In an advisory issued on Saturday, the Bengaluru City Police said AI-generated explicit material is increasingly being weaponised to harass, blackmail and extort individuals, particularly women.

Officials from the city's cybercrime wing said a majority of such cases originate from images sourced from social media platforms. "Publicly available photographs are often misused to create morphed or explicit content using AI tools. These images are then circulated or used to threaten victims," an official said.

The police urged users to keep their social media accounts private wherever possible and exercise caution while accepting friend requests or engaging with unknown profiles. Citizens have also been advised to verify online identities and refrain from sharing personal photographs or sensitive information with strangers. "Even casual interactions on social media can expose people to serious cyber risks," the official added.

City Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh told TNIE that while complaints specifically related to AI-generated explicit content are still limited, the broader category of AI-enabled and internet-based crimes is steadily increasing.

"There are currently no dedicated legal provisions that deal exclusively with this type of offence, which is why regulation in this space is becoming increasingly important," he said. Singh said Bengaluru police stations are equipped with advanced technological tools to trace IP addresses, identify offenders and initiate content takedowns. However, he stressed that timely reporting plays a crucial role in effective action. "In cyber crimes, delays can make evidence harder to trace. Immediate reporting helps us act swiftly to block content and identify its source," he said.

REFORM ONLY ON PAPER

Sky-high deposits persist despite new rental norms

DHIYA VEER @Bengaluru

KARNATAKA'S rental market is inching towards reform with the state government passing the Karnataka Rent (Amendment) Bill, 2025, during the recently concluded legislative session. However, the gap between the Model Tenancy Act's (MTA) vision and ground-level practice continues to persist.

Despite increasing awareness about deposit caps, written agreements and registration norms, enforcement remains patchy, leaving tenants vulnerable. Experts warn that without state-specific rules and robust dispute-resolution mechanisms, the benefits of the Act may largely remain on paper. A state-specific tenancy framework is currently under discussion.

In Bengaluru, tenants continue to report arbitrary deposit demands, inconsistent agreements and cash-only transactions, even as the state signals openness to adopting the updated MTA. In one instance, a tenant was asked to pay a Rs 10 lakh deposit for a flat with a monthly rent of Rs 60,000 in central Bengaluru.

A chartered accountant who has rented in the city for over a decade described the system as a "rental mafia", recalling instances where landlords refused to sign written agreements and demanded large sums upfront. Deposit refunds, she said, remain "a nightmare", particularly in standalone buildings.

Bangalore Apartments Federation president Satish Mallya acknowledged the need for reform, noting a spike in deposit-related complaints from tenants in high-density IT corridors such as Whitefield. Karnataka, he said, "is bound to take time in implementing the proposed Karnataka Rent (Amendment) Act, 2025", as the framework must balance existing state practices with the MTA's provisions.

He also stressed the need for mandatory registration of rental agreements, which continues to be ignored in most residential properties despite being standard practice in commercial leasing.

Ayub Khan of the Bangalore Realtors Association of India said the new framework could benefit middle-class tenants but cautioned that landlords also face risks. "Many tenants default on rent for months and then drag landlords into prolonged legal battles," he said, adding that reforms must safeguard both sides to prevent resistance.

Industry analyst Seema Harsha, co-founder of IndiaAssetz, said compliance varies widely. While organised apartment complexes are increasingly adopting digital stamping, formal agreements and transparent processes, standalone properties continue to lag.

"Although the two-month deposit cap is widely discussed, landlords continue to demand significantly higher amounts, driven by mistrust and slow dispute resolution," she said, adding that awareness has outpaced enforcement.

Stones thrown at the time of puja, states FIR

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ACCORDING to a complaint filed by Shashi Kumar (43), devotees were engaged in worship around 8.15 pm and a procession of devotees was passing near the Panchamukhi Nagadevata Temple, when three to four youth threw stones at the procession. One girl in the procession sustained a severe head injury and started bleeding. She was admitted to a local hospital.

The FIR stated that such incidents had occurred earlier as well. On two or three previous occasions, fires were set during religious celebrations.

Om Shakti and Ayyappa Swamy devotees together submitted the complaint, seeking appropriate legal action against those responsible for hurting religious sentiments and committing atrocities against Dalits.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is information to the General Public that my client is intend to purchase of Schedule property from its owner **Smt. NEELAM ASHOK AMIN @ NEELAM SONA AMIN, W/o Gautam Srivastava, D/o Ashok Babubhai Amin,** R/a #. 525, Chaucer Street Pal Alto, CA-94301, U.S.A, presently camp at Bangalore. If anybody having any right, share, claim or objection to the proposed purchase may file their objections in writing along with copies of supporting documents, within **7 days** from the date of this publication to the purchaser's advocate at below mentioned address, failing which my clients will be advised to go ahead and complete the formalities for registration of the sale deed in respect of the Schedule Property.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the property bearing site No.73A, Khata No.1966, BBMP No. 98/2374/1966/73/A, having EPID No. 6343223805, formed in converted Survey Nos. 173, 81/2C and 81/2B, situated at **Kothanur Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk,** Bengaluru, converted for Non agricultural residential purpose, vide conversion order No. B.DIS.ALSR(S).243/1992-93, 244/1992-93 and 245/92-93, dated:07.01.1993, dated:09.03.1993 & dated:07.01.1993 respectively, passed by the deputy commissioner, Bangalore, which is together constitute housing colony namely **"CLASSIC ORCHARDS"** presently the property within the limits of the B.S.C.C/B.B.M.P and Ward No.194 of Gottigere and bounded on the :

East by : Property Bearing No. 50,
West by : Road,
North by : Property No.73,
South by : Road.
MEASURING:
East to West on the Northern Side 81 Feet, East to West on the Southern Side 89 Feet and North to South on the Eastern Side 40 Feet 6 Inches, North to South on the Western Side 77 Feet 6 Inches.
IN ALL MEASURING : 4779 SQUARE FEET.
Comprising of 250 Square Feet of residential building there on.

R.R.Upadhya, Advocate
RAVISHANKAR ASSOCIATES,
#92, 2nd Main Road, Between 7th & 8th Cross, Chamrajpet, Bangalore -18 Mob: 9241102941

IN THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL -II, AT BENGALURU

O.A. No.304/2023

BETWEEN :
CANARA BANK ...Applicant
AND
1. M/s. Leather Land, Represented by its Proprietrix, Smt. Pushpalatha K .B., No. 149, Sri Padaka Complex, Mahayogi Vermana Road, 5th Main, Malleshpalya, New Thippasandra Post, Bangalore - 560 075.
Residing at : Gowri Nilaya, 1st Main, 3 G Cross, Malelshpalya, New Thippasandra Post ...Defendant

NOTICE ISSUED UNDER RULE 23(VIII) OF THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEDURE) RULES 1993

WHEREAS, the Applicant has instituted an Application under section 19 of Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 against the Defendnts for recovery of a sum of **INR.46,82,140/-** (Rupees Forty Six Lakhs Eighty Two Thousand One Hundred Forty Only) together with current and future interest and other relief's.

The above Defendants are therefore, hereby directed to appear before the Tribunal in person or through an advocate or through authorised agents in support of their defence to show cause within 30 days from the date of publication or on before **06.02.2026 at 10.30 a.m.** as to why reliefs prayed for should not be granted.

Take notice that in case of default, the application will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal, on this the **27.09.2025**

Sd/- Registrar
Debts Recovery Tribunal-2 , Bengaluru

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client Smt. Shashikala D, W/o Sri.Nagaraj K, residing at No.4, 10th Cross, Nanjappa Layout, Bangalore North Vidyaranyapura Bangalore North, Karnataka- 560097, is intending to purchase the immovable property more fully described in the schedule hereunder belonging to Sri Umesh Chandra Tiwari and Sri Pankaj Kumar Tiwari, both are residing at No. 7, Ramachandrapura, Jalahalli Post, Bangalore 560013.

If anybody having any right, title, interest, claim, share, lien, charge, mortgage, lease, agreement of sale, litigation or encumbrance of whatsoever nature over the above said property are hereby called upon to submit their objections/ claims with supporting documents to the undersigned counsel or to my client within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice.If no objections or claims are received within the stipulated time, it shall be presumed that there are no claims against the said schedule property and the proposed purchaser shall proceed with the transaction. Any claims raised thereafter shall not be entertained.This notice is issued for the information of the general public.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY : All that piece and parcel of South Portion of Site bearing No.3, being bifurcated as Site No.3/B, CMC Byatarayanapura Katha No.277, BBMP New E-PID No.1563914468, formed out of Survey No.33, of Ramachandrapura village, Yelahanka Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Bangalore, the Site Measuring East to West on the North Side 32 feet, on the South side 34 feet and North to South 15 feet, in all measuring 495 Sq.ft and bounded as follows: -East By: Nanjappa Layout West By: Road; North By: Site No.3/A, (being North Portion of Site No.3) South By :Site No.4

Sd/- UDANESHWARA. M. G., Advocate,
#250, 1st Floor, MM Plaza, Narasipura Main Road,
Date : 05.01.2026 Vidyaranyapura, Bangalore-560 097.
Place : Bangalore M: 9480524268/ 080-49585668.

TAMIL NADU TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LTD
Notice Inviting Tenders (E-Tendering Process)

Specification No.	Tender Inviting Authority	Name of the Work
T-2359	SE / Tr-V	Establishment of Thumbalapatty 230 KV AIS SS at Marichilambu

For details of works / Procurement / Due date of submission / opening, viewing and downloading of e-tenders, please visit websites: **www.tantransco.go.in, www.tenders.tn.gov.in, www.tntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app** DIPR/16/Tender/2026

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12/A, B.G.S. Raja Mansion, 2nd Floor, 5th Cross, 2nd Main, Kalasipalyam New Etxn., Bangalore - 560 002.
Ph.: 080-41149521, 22210493, E-mail: kgta61@gmail.com; Web: www.kgta.in

NOTIFICATION

Dear Hon. Members,

This is to inform you that the MC Election of KGTA for the term 2026-28, scheduled for **6th January 2026** at KGTA office premises, KPN Extn., Bangalore-2, has been withdrawn due to mistakes in voter's list and also the returning officer's withdrawl from performing election duty of KGTA. The new election process will be intimated to you shortly.

Prakash Pandey President - 9886322224
B. Somasundaram Hon. Secretary - 9880240240

KARNATAKA STATE WAREHOUSING CORPORATION
"Ugrana Bhavana", No 43, Primrose Road, Bengaluru-560025.
Tel: 080-29533679 Fax:080-29533673
E-mail : mdkswc2018@gmail.com, Website: www.kswc.karnataka.gov.in

No:KSWC/COM-4/GT-2/Notification-30/2033/2025-26 DATE:03.01.2026

NOTIFICATION

The corporation is offering storage space on lock & key basis to store agriculture produce, raw / processed materials / manufactured / consumer / industrial / medical goods on short / long term basis. Interested parties may visit **https://kswc.karnataka.gov.in** or Warehouse Managers / Regional Managers and obtain application / documents.

Filled application in sealed cover may be submitted to Managing Director at the above address **on or before 19.01.2026.** For more information please contact No: 9148511919, 8277070838 or this office, Warehouse Manager / Regional Manager.

Sd/-
DIPR/CP/JA/4849/2025-26 Managing Director

IN THE COURT OF THE XLI ADDL. CITY CIVIL AND SESSIONS JUDGE AT BENGALURU (CCH 42)
O.S. No. 7438 of 2024

BETWEEN: Canara Bank , Amara Jyothi nagar Branch, Having its address at No. 15, 10th Main, Pattegarapalya Main Road, Sampige Layout, Amarajyothinagar, Bangalore - 560 079. **...Plaintiff.**
And:
M/s. Anjanadri Medical & General Stores & Ors **....Defendant**

SUMMONS TO THE DEFENDANTS No. 1 to 3 UNDER ORDER 5 RULE 20 OF CPC

1. M/s. Anjanadri Medical & General Stores , No. 61, Nisarga Road, Muneshwara Nagar, Sunkadakatte, Bangalore - 560 091.
2. Mr. Sharath Babu, aged about 40 years, Prop. M/s. Anjanadri Medical & General Stores, Having address at : No. 61, Nisarga Road, Muneshwara Nagar, Sunkadakatte, Bangalore - 560 091.
3. Mr.Narasimha Murthy. Aged about 45 years, Having address at: C/o. Jai Maruthi Hospital. #208/210, Hegganhalli Main Road, Peenya 2nd Stage, Bangalore - 560 091. **...Defendants**

Whereas, the above named Plaintiff has filed a civil suit for Recovery off a sum of **Rs.2,48,634.65** (Rupees Two Laksh Forty Eight Thousand Six Hundred and Thirty Four and Paise Sixty Five Only) as on 31.08.2024 apart from future interest of 13.50% p.a. in from 01.01.2023 in OS No. 7438/2024 and same is pending adjudication in CCH 42, before the XLI Addl. City Civil and Sessions Judge, Bengaluru.

You are hereby summoned to appear before the XLI Addl. City Civil and Sessions Juege, Bengaluru, in person or by a pleader duly instructed and able to answer all material questions relating to the above proceedings on the **22nd January 2026 at 11.00 a.m.** to answer the same, if failed the suit will be decided in your absence as Exparte.

Given under my hand and seal of the Court This day of **26.12.2025.**

By the Order of the Court
Sd/- Senior Sheristedar
City Civil Court, Bengaluru

Mr. Naushad A. K./ Venu K. V.
Advocates, 3rd Floor, 18/3, Andree Road, Shathinagar, Bangalore - 560 027.

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IN THE COURT OF THE PRL. SENIOR CIVIL JUDGE BENGALUR RURAL, AT BANGALORE
P & S.C. No. 40/2025

BETWEEN : 1. Mrs. Vasanthi Gavini, aged 45 years, W/o Late Gopala Krishna Kanuri
2. Master Yashas Kanuri, aged 16 years, S/o Late Gopala Krishna Kanuri (being minor represented by his natural guardian and mother)
3. Master Shreyas Kanuri, aged 16 years S/o Late Gopala Krishna Kanuri (being minor represented by his natural guardian and mother)
All the three petitioners residing at F611, Parimala Sunridge, Siddapura, Varthur Main Road, Ramgondanahalli, Whitefield, Bangalore - 560066. **...PETITIONERS**

VERSUS

NIL **...RESPONDENT/S**

Notice to the General Public

WHEREAS, the petitioners, above-named has filed a petition to this Hon'ble Court under section 372 of the Indian Succession Act,1925, this Hon'ble Court has vide its order dated 19.12.2025 to issue Notice through Paper Publication to the general public in respect of the relief sought by the petitioners, seeking permission "1. To grant/issue Succession Certificate in the name of Petitioner No.1 Vasanthi Gavini, W/o Late Gopala Krishna Kanuri for herself and on behalf of petitioner No.2 & 3, empowering Petitioner No.1 to operate the Account No. 6MN-14493 having equity name CommScope Holding Company, INC (COMM) in MERRILL, A Bank of America Company for the stocks/shares mentioned in the Schedule hereunder, held in the name of Late Gopala Krishna Kanuri, to receive interest or dividends on or to negotiate or transfer or sell the stocks/shares; 2. To pass an order that that the petitioners are entitled for succession Certificate in respect of the stocks/shares belonging to deceased Gopala Krishna Kanuri as mentioned in the Schedule by allowing the petition: 3. Pass such other orders as this Hon'ble Court may grant in the nature of the Petition". Hence, this public notice calling for objections, if any, by **12/02/2026 at 11.00 AM** in this Court. Take notice that in default of any objections on the day and time above-mentioned, the case will be heard and determined in the absence without any objections.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

976 stocks of COMMSCOPE HLDG CO INC in the Account of Late Gopala Krishna Kanuri in the Account bearing No. 6MN-14493 having equity name CommScope Holding Company, INC (COMM) in MERRILL, A Bank of America Company

The and case for hearing on **12.02.2026** and if any person/s desire to oppose the said petition such persons may appear in this Hon'ble PRL. SENIOR CIVIL JUDGE, BENGALURU RURAL AT BENGALURU **on 12.02.2026 at 11:00 A.M.** in person or by duly authorized pleader along with documentary proof.

Further take notice that in the default of appearance of any person/s the same shall be decided on merits and order accordingly.

Given under my hand and seal pf the court on the 03.01.2026.

By Order of the Court, Chief Ministerial Officer, Senior Civil Judge Court, Bengaluru Rural district, Bengaluru.

Advocate for Petitioners : Stanley Sam, Dr. Latha G. Nair, (Advocates -Supreme Court & Karnataka High Court)
STANLEY LATHA ASSOCIATES
Attorney & Solicitors
#18 to 21, 2nd Floor, View Point, M. Gandhi Nagar, Marathahalli PO, Bangalore-560037.
Ph : 9449826383, 9448076383

APTUS — Aptus Finance India Private Limited
88, Doshi Towers, 205, Poonamalle High Road, Kilpauk, Chennai-600 010.Telephone: 044-4565 0003

Possession Notice

Appendix IV (Under Rule8 (1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002)

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorized officer of **Aptus Finance India Private Ltd** under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued **demand notice dated 24--10--2025 calling upon the borrowers 1.Mr. Annappachar & 2.Mrs. Harisha A to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being for LAP - CONSTRUCTION in Loan Account No:TBANGL0051107 of Rs. 884598/- (Rupees Eight Lakhs Eighty Four Thousand Five Hundred Ninety Eight Only)** within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken "Symbolic Possession" of the property described herein below in exercise of the powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rule **on this 31st day of December 2025.**

The borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of **Aptus Finance India Private Ltd for an amount of Rs.918602/- (Rupees Nine Lakhs Eighteen Thousand Six Hundred Two Only)as on 29.12.2025** and interest thereon.

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY:-

All that piece and parcel of the immovable property bearing E-Khatha No.48-555-2244, Property No.14510/1152/5729, B.G.S Layout, Nagarasabha Limits, Ward no.2, Kanakapura Town, Kanakapura Taluk, Ramanagara District being bounded by :- of land and building and all other appurtenances attached to the said property. **Boundaries: North By:** Site No.11511 **South By:** Site No.11513 **East By:** Site No.1115 **West By:** Road.

Date: 31.12.2025 **Sd/- Authorised Officer**
Place: Kanakapura **Aptus Finance India Private Limited**

CITY UNION BANK LIMITED
CUB TRUST AND EXCELLENCE SINCE 1904
Credit Recovery and Management Department
Administrative Office: No.24-B, Gandhi Nagar, Kumbakonam - 612001. **E-Mail id:** crmd@cityunionbank.in, **Phone:** 0435-2432322, **Fax:** 0435-2431746

TENDER-CUM-AUCTION SALE NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT 2002

The following property/ies mortgaged to **City Union Bank Limited** will be sold in Tender-cum-Public Auction by the Authorised Officer of the Bank, under Rule 8 (6) & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, under the SARFAESI Act, 2002, for recovery of a sum of **Rs.32,15,246/- (Rupees Thirty Two Lakh Fifteen Thousand Two Hundred and Forty Six only)** as on **30-12-2025** together with further interest to be charged from **31-12-2025** onwards and other expenses, any other dues to the Bank by the borrowers / guarantors **No.1) M/s. A R Silk Traders, (Represented by Mr. Afshad Pasha as its Proprietor), 2nd Cross, Ward No.16, No.2893, Motinagar, Ramanagara - 562159. No.2) Mr. Afshad Pasha.A, S/o. Abdul Subhan, No.56, Ward No.14, Town Police Station, 1st Cross, Nalbandwadi, Mohalla, Ramanagara - 562159. No.3) Mrs. Jabeen Taj, W/o. Afshad Pasha.A, No.56, Ward No.14, Town Police Station, 1st Cross, Nalbandwadi, Mohalla, Ramanagara - 562159.**

Immovable Property Mortgaged to our Bank
(Property Owned by Mrs. Jabeen Taj, W/o. Afshad Pasha.A)

All that Piece and Parcel of Property Bearing Old Municipal Khatha No.130/1452/2485C, Property No.14-2-506-56/1, Assessment No.130/1452/2485C, Measuring : East to West - 12 Feet and North to South - 38 Feet. Totally Measuring 456.00 Sq.Ft. Situated at Nalbandwadi 1st Stage, Ramanagara. Bounded on : East by : House of Babul, West by : House of Aslam, North by : Road, South by : House of Israq.

Reserve Price : Rs.28,00,000/-
(Rupees Twenty Eight Lakh only)

AUCTION DETAILS

Date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale	Venue
12-02-2026	City Union Bank Limited, Bengaluru-Ramanagara Branch, B.M.Road, 316, I Stage, Near Bus Stand, Bengaluru-Mysore Main Road, Ramanagara, Bengaluru Rural - 571511. Telephone No.080-27276688, Cell Nos.9379511195, 8925964904.

Terms and Conditions of Tender-cum-Auction Sale :

(1) The intending bidders should be present in person for the auction and participate personally and give a declaration in writing to the effect that he/she is bidding for himself/herself. **(2)** The intending bidders may obtain the Tender Forms from **The Manager, City Union Bank Limited, Bengaluru-Ramanagara Branch, B.M.Road, 316, I Stage, Near Bus Stand, Bengaluru - Mysore Main Road, Ramanagara, Bengaluru Rural - 571511. (3)** The intending bidders should submit their bids only in the Tender Form prescribed in sealed envelopes addressed to **The Authorised Officer, City Union Bank Ltd.,** together with a Pay Order / Demand Draft for an EMD of **10%** of the Reserve Price, drawn in favour of **"City Union Bank Ltd.", on or before 12.00 Noon** on the date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. **(4)** For inspection of the property and other particulars, the intending purchaser may contact **Telephone No.080-27276688, Cell Nos.9379511195, 8925964904. (5)** The property/ ies are sold on "As-is-where-is", "As-is-what-is" and "whatever-there is" basis. **(6)** The sealed tenders will be opened in the presence of the intending bidders at **01.00 p.m.** on the date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. Though in general the sale will be by way of closed tenders, the Authorised Officer may, at his sole discretion, conduct an Open Auction among the interested bidders who desire to quote a bid higher than the one received in the closed tender process, and in such an event, the sale shall be conferred on the person making highest bid. The sale, however, is subject to confirmation of City Union Bank Limited. **(7)** The successful bidder shall have to pay **25% (inclusive of EMD paid)** of the Sale amount **immediately** on completion of sale and the balance amount of **75%** within **15 days** from the date of confirmation of sale, failing which the initial deposit of **25%** shall be forfeited. **(8)** The Sale Certificate will be issued by the Authorised Officer in favour of the successful purchaser only after receipt of the entire sale consideration within the time limit stipulated herein. **(9)** The successful purchaser shall bear the charges/fees payable for conveyance, such as stamp duty, registration fee etc., as applicable under law. **(10)** The successful bidder should pay the statutory dues (lawful house tax, electricity charges and other dues), TDS, GST if any, due to Government, Government Undertaking and local bodies. **(11)** The Authorised Officer shall have all the powers to accept or reject the bids or postpone or cancel the sale without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Place : Kumbakonam, Date : 02-01-2026 **Authorised Officer**

Regd. Office: 149, T.S.R. (Big) Street, Kumbakonam, Thanjavur District, Tamil Nadu - 612001, **CIN -** L65110TN1904PLC001287, **Telephone No.**0435-2402322, **Fax:** 0435-2431746, **Website:** www.cityunionbank.com

MANGALORE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED
MESCOM
(Government of Karnataka undertaking)
O & M Zone, 'Vidyuth Bhavan', B.H. Road, M.R.S. Shimoga - 577 203
CIN: U40109 KA 2002 SGC 030425

Ref No: CEE/SZ/SMG/EE(C)/AE(C)/F-Tenders/2025-26/CYS-22 Dated: 17-12-2025

TENDER NOTIFICATION

MESCOM invites tenders through e-procurement mode only from the Registered KPWD contractors having EPF, ESI, GST and Labour department Registration for civil works listed below.

Sl.No	Tender Number	Name of the Work
01	MESCOM/ 2025-26/OW/ WORK_INDENT385	Providing Galvalium sheet at working area and other allied works to LM Quarters and Improvement Works at Avinahalli

For detailed information and to participate in the tender through e-procurement mode please access the tendering website **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** on or **after 06.01.2026.** Any further details can be obtained from the undersigned during office hours.

DIPR/DK/MPL/1344/25-26 **Sd/- Chief Engineer (Ele.)**

For Power Related Complaints and Assistance Call Toll Free Number 1912

CITY UNION BANK LIMITED
CUB TRUST AND EXCELLENCE SINCE 1904
Credit Recovery and Management Department
Administrative Office: No.24-B, Gandhi Nagar, Kumbakonam - 612001. **E-Mail id:** crmd@cityunionbank.in, **Phone:** 0435-2432322, **Fax:** 0435-2431746

TENDER-CUM-AUCTION SALE NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT 2002

The following property/ies mortgaged to **City Union Bank Limited** will be sold in Tender-cum-Public Auction by the Authorised Officer of the Bank, under Rule 8 (6) & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, under the SARFAESI Act, 2002, for recovery of a sum of **Rs.88,26,788/- (Rupees Eighty Eight Lakh Twenty Six Thousand Seven Hundred and Eighty Eight only)** as on **30-12-2025** together with further interest to be charged from **31-12-2025** onwards and other expenses, any other dues to the Bank by the borrowers / guarantors **No.1) Ms. Sri Megha Tours and Travels, RTGKVSSN Building, 1st Floor, PLD Bank Road, Ijoor, Ramanagara - 562159. Also at, Ms. Sri Megha Tours and Travels, No.75, Sri Lakshmi Venkateshwara Nelaya, Malleshwaram Extension, Behind Netaji Popular School, Ijoor, Ramanagara - 562159. No.2) Mr. Prashantha Kumar S, S/o. Mr. Srinivasa, No.75, Sri Lakshmi Venkateshwara Nelaya, Malleshwaram Extension, Behind Netaji Popular School, Ijoor, Ramanagara - 562159. No.3) Mrs. Kavitha Kumari K, W/o. Mr. Prashantha Kumar S, No.75, Sri Lakshmi Venkateshwara Nelaya, Malleshwaram Extension, Behind Netaji Popular School, Ijoor, Ramanagara - 562159.**

Immovable Property Mortgaged to Our Bank
(Property Owned by Mr. Prashantha Kumar S, S/o. Mr. Srinivasa)

All the piece and parcel of the property bearing Old Municipal Khatha No. 1978, Site No.75, New Municipal Khatha No. 756/2169/1978, measuring East to West 30 feet and North to South 40 feet, Situated at Ward No. 30, Ijoor Hills, Shed Area, Ramanagara. Totally Measuring 1,200.00 sq.ft. Bounded by : East : Site No. 74, West : Site No. 76, North : 25 Feet Road, South : Land of Andanappa.

Reserve Price : Rs.48,00,000/-
(Rupees Forty Eight Lakh only)

AUCTION DETAILS

Date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale	Venue
12-02-2026	City Union Bank Limited, Bengaluru-Ramanagara Branch, B.M.Road, 316, I Stage, Near Bus Stand, Bengaluru-Mysore Main Road, Ramanagara, Bengaluru Rural - 571511. Telephone No.080-27276688, Cell Nos.9379511195, 8925964904.

Terms and Conditions of Tender-cum-Auction Sale :

(1) The intending bidders should be present in person for the auction and participate personally and give a declaration in writing to the effect that he/she is bidding for himself/herself. **(2)** The intending bidders may obtain the Tender Forms from **The Manager, City Union Bank Limited, Bengaluru-Ramanagara Branch, B.M.Road, 316, I Stage, Near Bus Stand, Bengaluru - Mysore Main Road, Ramanagara, Bengaluru Rural - 571511. (3)** The intending bidders should submit their bids only in the Tender Form prescribed in sealed envelopes addressed to **The Authorised Officer, City Union Bank Ltd.,** together with a Pay Order / Demand Draft for an EMD of **10%** of the Reserve Price, drawn in favour of **"City Union Bank Ltd.", on or before 01.00 p.m.** on the date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. **(4)** For inspection of the property and other particulars, the intending purchaser may contact **Telephone No.080-27276688, Cell Nos.9379511195, 8925964904. (5)** The property/ ies are sold on "As-is-where-is", "As-is-what-is" and "whatever-there is" basis. **(6)** The sealed tenders will be opened in the presence of the intending bidders at **02.00 p.m.** on the date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. Though in general the sale will be by way of closed tenders, the Authorised Officer may, at his sole discretion, conduct an Open Auction among the interested bidders who desire to quote a bid higher than the one received in the closed tender process, and in such an event, the sale shall be conferred on the person making highest bid. The sale, however, is subject to confirmation of City Union Bank Limited. **(7)** The successful bidder shall have to pay **25% (inclusive of EMD paid)** of the Sale amount **immediately** on completion of sale and the balance amount of **75%** within **15 days** from the date of confirmation of sale, failing which the initial deposit of **25%** shall be forfeited. **(8)** The Sale Certificate will be issued by the Authorised Officer in favour of the successful purchaser only after receipt of the entire sale consideration within the time limit stipulated herein. **(9)** The successful purchaser shall bear the charges/fees payable for conveyance, such as stamp duty, registration fee etc., as applicable under law. **(10)** The successful bidder should pay the statutory dues (lawful house tax, electricity charges and other dues), TDS, GST if any, due to Government, Government Undertaking and local bodies. **(11)** The Authorised Officer shall have all the powers to accept or reject the bids or postpone or cancel the sale without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Place : Kumbakonam, Date : 03-01-2026 **Authorised Officer**

Regd. Office: 149, T.S.R. (Big) Street, Kumbakonam, Thanjavur District, Tamil Nadu - 612001, **CIN -** L65110TN1904PLC001287, **Telephone No.**0435-2402322, **Fax:** 0435-2431746, **Website:** www.cityunionbank.com

JANA SMALL FINANCE BANK
(A Scheduled Commercial Bank)

Registered Office: The Fairway, Ground & First Floor, Survey No.10/1, 11/2 & 12/2B, Off Domlur, Koramangla Inner Ring Road, Next to EGL Business Park, Challaghatta, Bangalore-560071.

NOTICE OF SALE THROUGH PRIVATE TREATY

SALE OF IMMOVABLE ASSETS CHARGED TO THE BANK UNDER THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT 2002. (SARFAESI ACT)

The undersigned as Authorized Officer of Jana Small Finance Bank Limited has taken over **Physical Possession** of the schedule property under the SARFAESI Act.

The Authorized Officer of **Jana Small Finance Bank Limited,** had already conducted multiple public auctions for selling the property, but they turned out to be unsuccessful as no bids were received. Hence please be informed that if the total outstanding dues in the aforesaid loan account are not paid within **Fifteen (15) Days** from the date of this publication of this notice, then the Authorized officer will proceed for sale via private treaty of the property as stated below.

Public at large is informed that the secured property as mentioned in the Schedule are available for sale through Private Treaty, as per the terms agreeable to the Bank for realization of Bank's dues on **"AS IS WHERE IS BASIS"** and **"AS IS WHAT IS BASIS".**

Standard terms & conditions for sale of property through Private Treaty are as under:

1. Sale through Private Treaty will be on **"AS IS WHERE IS BASIS"** and **"AS IS WHAT IS BASIS".**
2. The purchaser will be required to deposit 100% of the sale consideration on the expiry of publication of this notice.
3. In case of non-acceptance of offer of purchase by the Bank, the amount if any paid along with the application will be refunded without any interest with in the stipulated time.
4. The purchaser should conduct due diligence on all aspects related to the property (under sale through private treaty) to his satisfaction. The purchaser shall not be entitled to make any claim against the Authorized Officer/ Secured Creditor in this regard at a later date.
5. The Bank reserves the right to reject any offer of purchase without assigning any reason.
6. The purchaser has to bear all stamp duty, registration fee, and other expenses, taxes, duties, society dues in respect of purchase of the property.
7. Sale shall be in accordance with the provisions of SARFAESI Act / Rules.

Sr. No.	Loan Account Number	Name of Borrower/ Co-Borrowers	Amount as per 13(2) Demand Notice under SARFAESI Act.	Reserve Price for Private Treaty
1	46989440000418	1) Mrs. Lakshmamma, 2) Mr. Rakesh R	**Rs.2,86,299.70** (Rupees Two Lakh Eighty Six Thousand Two Hundred Ninety Nine And Seventy Paisa Only) **due as on 29-08-2023**	**Rs.3,00,000/-** (Rupees Three Lakh Only)
	Details of Secured Assets: All that part and parcel of the property bearing E-Katha No.78/1/220/200/2, ID No.15030030180080012 4, situated at Melekote Village, Thubagere Hobli, Doddabalapura Taluk, Bangalore Rural District and **Bounded on the (as per E-Khatha): East by:** Road, **West by:** Property of Sri. Tammanna, S/o. Sri Kempanna, **North by:** Site of Ashoka, **South by:** House of Shashikala. Measuring East to West : 10.3632 mtrs and North to South : 7.010400000000001 mtrs, in all measuring 72.65 Sq.mtrs.			

The aforesaid Borrower's/ Co-borrower's attention is invited to provisions of section 13(8) of SARFAESI Act for redemption of secured assets mentioned hereinabove by tendering the aforementioned outstanding dues together with all costs, charges and expenses incurred by the bank before the sale of secured assets.

Correspondence Address: Mr. Ranjan Naik (Mob. No.6362951653), email: ranjan.naik@janabank.com. Jana Small Finance Bank Limited, (formerly known as M/s. Janalakshmi Financial Services Pvt. Ltd.), having Office The Fairway, Ground & First Floor, Survey No.10/1, 11/2 & 12/2B, Off Domlur, Koramangala Inner Ring Road, Next to EGL Business Park, Challaghatta, Bangalore-560071.

Date: 05.01.2026, Place: Bangalore Rural **Sd/- Authorized Officer, Jana Small Finance Bank Limited**

On learning about the transfer of headmaster Beerappa Andagi, students at the government high school in Bahaddurbandi village of Koppal district, along with villagers, on Tuesday locked the school gate, declaring that they would not allow him to leave. Andagi has been serving at the school for the past one year. Recently, he all 24 students to Bengaluru on a plane tour at his own expense

Water from Upper Bhadra Project in a month

920 farmers, whose crops were inundated by water from Vani Vilas Sagar dam will get relief money soon: Minister

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Chitradurga

DISTRICT In-charge Minister D Sudhakar on Sunday announced that the water from the Upper Bhadra Project will flow to Gonuru Lake in Chitradurga Taluk via canal within a month.

Speaking to the media following a Ganga Pooja ceremony at the Vani Vilas Sagar reservoir, Sudhakar said the final testing is currently underway. He assured that the water will be directed to Gonuru Lake through the canal associated with the Upper Bhadra Project.

The minister said a similar ceremonial offering was made last January. This year all MLAs from the district joined the Ganga Pooja. Although there were plans to invite the chief minister and deputy

chief minister to the event, it was shelved owing to their time constraints.

Sudhakar said the water is currently flowing over the waste weir in modest quantities, which prompted the scheduling of the pooja for Sunday. He also said arrangements have been made to disburse the relief amounts to 920 farmers in Hosadurga Taluk, whose crops were inundated by water from Vani Vilas Sagar. MLA BG Govindappa stressed that measures are also being undertaken to repair the road and bridge that have sustained damage due to the flooding.

KSSIDC Chairman and Challakere MLA T Raghumurthy, Holalkere MLA Dr M Chandrappa, State Safai Karmachari Commission Chairman P Raghu, Deputy Commissioner T Venkatesh, ZP CEO Dr S Akash and officials from the Upper Bhadra Project were present at the event.

Muslim man builds Hanuman temple in Dharwad bus depot

MALLIKARJUN HIREMATH
@ Dharwad

A constable in the security section of the North West Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (NWKSRTC), a Muslim, has built a temple dedicated to Lord Hanuman on the premises of the bus depot in Dharwad. Though the temple construction was completed last year, it came to light only recently.

Lalsab Rasalsab Budihal (60) took up the construction work despite opposition from his own community leaders and higher officials in the corporation. He funded the project from his own pocket and with contributions from his colleagues in the department.

Budihal told TNIE that there were clashes between employees and officers in the security and vigilance departments over the construction of the temple. The idol, which was brought to install in the temple, was kept on the new depot premises.

"When I was at work in the new depot, I found the idol lying in the vehicle parking place. The ill-treatment of the deity hurt me, and I decided to construct the temple. Many people opposed my efforts, but the importance of the cause and dedication pushed me ahead. It is not just a temple, it is a symbol of brotherhood and respect towards other religions," he said.

A staffer at the depot said that some of the employees had joined hands in the initial stage of construction, but they withdrew support after being threatened with suspension by the vigilance team. Lalsab, however, never stepped back. "He received threats from people of his own faith, but the strength of his determination and blessings of Hanuman helped him achieve the goal," he said.

An officer at the NWKRTC said, "He is a loyal person and his opponents failed to find a reason to stop the construction of the temple. After a stage, the majority of employees from Muslim community supported him."

Lalsab Budihal in front of the temple at the bus depot in Dharwad | EXPRESS

Forest department officials preparing a nest for olive ridley turtles to lay eggs

As nesting season arrives, efforts on to protect olive ridley turtles

ABHIJITH N KOLPE
@ Mangaluru

AHEAD of the sea turtle nesting season, the forest department has intensified conservation measures along the Mangaluru coastline by setting up hatcheries at Idya, Bengre Thannirbhavi and Shashihitlu. With January to March being the peak nesting period for olive ridley turtles, officials say they are fully prepared to safeguard turtle eggs and hatchlings this season.

The sustained efforts have yielded encouraging results. The survival rate of turtle hatchlings increased to 73.97% during 2024–25 from 50.3% in the previous season. In 2023–24, a total of 1,958 eggs were laid across 21 nests, from which 985 hatchlings were released into the sea. In 2024–25 so far, 2,490 eggs have been laid in 24 nests, resulting in the successful release of 1,842 hatchlings.

Deputy Conservator of Forests, Mangaluru Division, Anthony Mariappa said four dedicated teams, each comprising four forest officials, have been deployed to patrol the coastline from dawn to dusk. The teams closely monitor the hatcheries and look for flipper marks left by olive ridley turtles when they come ashore to nest and return to the sea, he said.

Information about turtles coming ashore at night is gathered with the support of fishermen, local residents and forest personnel. Once a nest is identified, the eggs are carefully relocated to secure hatcheries to protect them from threats such as dogs and humans. The hatcheries are guarded round-the-clock, and the entire process is monitored using CCTV surveillance until the hatchlings emerge and are safely released into the sea, said Mariappa.

Mariappa highlighted the importance of community involvement in conservation efforts. "Patrolling the entire coastline is challenging, so we conduct door-to-door awareness campaigns to gain the confidence of local communities and fishermen. We also provide an honorarium of Rs 5,000 to those who report turtle nesting. Last year, 22 people received this incentive," he said, adding that public participation has played a crucial role in olive ridley turtle conservation.

Range Forest Officer at the Coastal and Marine Ecosystem Cell of Mangaluru Division, Manoj Sona, warned that harming turtles or destroying their eggs is a serious offence under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act. He said the department ensures that eggs are secured wherever nesting occurs, with the help of local residents.

Manoj Sona also expressed concern over turtles found dead and washed ashore during the monsoon season, attributing the deaths to rough seas and marine pollution. "Plastic waste, discarded fishing nets and the discharge of hot water from industrial units pose serious threats to the marine ecosystem," he said, adding that the department aims to further improve hatchling survival rates through continued vigilance and community support.

EXPRESS READ

Five phones, six SIMs seized at Parappana Agrahara

Bengaluru: The prison authorities have seized five mobile phones and six SIM cards during a surprise raid at Parappana Agrahara on Sunday. The raid was conducted as part of the "Prison Reforms Awareness Campaign" from midnight to around 4am on Sunday. A case has been registered at Parappana Agrahara Police Station against those involved in smuggling the prohibited items into the prison, those who assisted them and the inmates who used the banned items. Since November, 126 mobile phones have been seized along with other prohibited items, and 24 FIRs have been registered against those involved. ENS

5 sub-registrars suspended for malpractice

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE state government has suspended five sub-registrars after detecting serious irregularities in property registrations carried out through the Kaveri 2.0 registration software.

At the Sarjapur sub-registrar office, authorities found that the "court order-based registration" feature—intended to grant limited exemptions only in cases backed by judicial directions—was misused to register multiple sale deeds without supporting court orders. Based on preliminary findings, sub-registrar Ravi Sankana Gouda has been placed under suspension, and a detailed inquiry has been ordered into all such registrations.

Similar irregularities were reported at the Banaswadi, Varthur and Halasuru sub-registrar offices, where sale deeds were registered without importing mandatory e-Khata details from the e-Swathu system, in violation of procedures. Of the five sub-registrars involved, one has since retired. The remaining four—N Satish Kumar, Sridhar (First Division Assistant and incharge sub-registrar), Girish Chandra and R Prabhavathi—have been suspended with effect from January 2.

400 special kids take Std 10, 12 exams through NIOS

RASHMI PATIL @ Bengaluru

AROUND 400 specially abled students have taken secondary (Class 10) and senior secondary (Class 12) courses through National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) this year.

V Swaminathan, the regional director of NIOS, said, "There are individuals as well as organisations that enroll specially abled children to pursue education through NIOS. Every year, during exams, we provide scribes to the candidates. For instance, in Bengaluru, Spastic Society of Karnataka, Ramana Maharshi School for Blind and an NGO Asha Kiran have registered their students to write exams in April 2025. We provide them with all sources and materials so that they can prepare for the exams."

The students include children with autism, cerebral palsy, blindness, low vision and speech or hearing impairment. Other specific learning disabilities include dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia and poor locomotor abilities, he said.

Priya Rao, the director of projects and administration at the Spastics Society of Karnataka, said, "We have smaller classrooms where the teacher–children ratio is 12:1, so that we can pay better attention and understand their way of learning. Those who face extreme difficulty in learning, we have a one on one teaching facility for such specially abled children. At least 30 children from our institution enroll in NIOS every year."

She added, "Students in Class 10 clear three subjects in the first year and two subjects in the second year. Children with special needs may have difficulties in understanding maths and science. So, they can opt for history, Indian culture and heritage art, painting, music and other courses. In case of slow learners, we will choose subjects like data entry, home science, business studies and others such subjects."

Apart from this, specially-abled students get 20 minutes extra for every one hour to complete their papers. If the child has difficulty reading the questions, they are also provided with 02the readers who reads questions for them so that they can write the answers.

There is also caregiver facility in the exam hall especially when they feel anxious while writing the exams.

TRAINING TEACHERS

Video-based programme makes learning easy at 108 government schools

ANUBHAB ROY @ Bengaluru

CONNECTING the Dots (CTD), a learning programme developed by Bengaluru-based trio Rajesh A Rao, Ravindra S Rao and Deepa LB Rajeev, makes high quality education easier in Science and English accessible to 108 government schools in Karnataka.

The programme, which achieves this goal through daily class modules, scholarships and more, was also recently awarded a grant of Rs 50 lakh by Infosys Foundation at its Aarohan Awards ceremony.

Rajesh said the driving force behind the inception of the idea in 2013 was that "Rote learning dominates our system, but today's world needs critical thinking and application skills." The programme got its first school of application in 2014, and in the same year, 700 teachers employed at government schools were trained.

"We work with 108 government schools across 17 districts in Karnataka, including many in Bengaluru Urban and Rural districts. Our focus is on schools with grades from 6 to 10 (English and Kannada medium) in districts that are lagging behind on education indicators," Rajesh said. The programme also includes periodic tests, exam-preparation sessions, quiz competitions and career counselling – all in remote, video-based methods.

For the work of such consequence, the recruitment is done with diligence. "Candidates go through written tests, multiple interviews and a demo-teaching session before being considered for onboarding. Over the years, we have interviewed nearly 30 to 40 candidates for every single appointment," he said. The current numerical strength stands at 46 full time teachers and 14 non-teaching staff members.

Given the scale, nature and depth of the programme, it is not entirely smooth sailing. Away from the metropolitan core, in the rural reaches of Karnataka school drop-out rates are a persistent concern. "Many students, especially in rural government schools, struggle to see the relevance or long-term value of education, and some are compelled to work after grade 10 for financial reasons. The CTD's student-centric approach focuses on rebuilding this faith in the power of education," Rao said. He said the teachers at CTD practise "concept-driven, application-oriented learning" to counter the effects of rote-learning.

Despite receiving co-operation from the district administrations of all the districts where CTD works in, no official monetary assistance has been offered by the state government. Besides the Aarohan Award grant money, the CTD is funded by various corporate social responsibility programmes.

SPACE

2026, a turning point for the Indian space programme

STARTING Point 2026

2025 in the history of the Republic of India would be prominently remembered as the year it fought its first high-technological precision-strike battle of the escalatory kind, Operation Sindoor, against the global terror hub of Pakistan. ISRO, in a departure from its earlier reticent posture, announced the pinpointed strikes at terrorist-cum-military installations deep inside the enemy territory that were, to a great degree, made possible by the country's space capabilities. The acknowledgement, little noticed, made it amply clear that India is now operating a civil-military fusion space programme.

2026 will be a revelatory year for the Indian space programme, as it will adapt to the fast- shifting global paradigm. The world is confronting four significant challenges analogous to those experienced in the 1930s -- a period of protracted conflict, demographic upheaval, decelerating growth in Western economies and the rapid obsolescence of the institutions that have supported the world order established in the 20th century. These challenges are fomenting protectionism and autarky; a notable illustration is the transformation of the US Department of Defence into the Department of War, which signals the United States' readiness for deglobalisation and geoeconomic multipolarity. Europe too is transcending towards a war economy. Consequently, these challenges are expected to impact the globalised space economy adversely in 2026.

CHAITANYA GIRI
Space and Emerging Tech Fellow, Observer Research Foundation

India's emerging commercial space sector has experienced rapid developments with aspirations over the past five years to establish enduring international business connections within the Western space market. The responses elicited from governments for India's Op Sindoor have offered a reality check to the Indian commercial space sector. The commercial space sector and the Department of Space will reevaluate their international cooperation strategies and pursue space partnerships with nations that have genuine interests in India's progress, given that India is the fastest-growing large economy globally.

India also is a crucial pole of the multipolar global order. In 2026, India will be required to assess aspects concerning its sovereignty and self-reliance in space technology, telecommunications and the space supply chain. The Indian commercial space sector must prepare to meet the needs of the armed forces and intelligence agencies in maintaining stability within India's sphere of influence, which now includes outer space.

In 2026, India will embark on the Gaganyaan missions for its ambitious human-rated spaceflight initiative, which includes raising the Bhartiya Antriksh Station. The safety of Indian 'vyomanauts', especially those operating in low-Earth orbit, would prompt India to reflect deeply on the rampant occupation of low-Earth orbit, a finite space, by inconsiderately deployed satellite constellations. The Chinese space station and the International Space Station are already facing significant issues related to densely packed satellites in the same orbits and the fragments they produce. However, since both space stations are built by conflicting factions, and the biggest constellations come from the same two countries, neither is ready to tone down the orbital squatter in the interest of the global commons in space. India will have to step up Gaganyaan; more than being an inspirational project, it will have to fulfil its duty to ensure secure and sustainable access for itself and for all nations in outer space.

2026 will also be an important year from the purview of new space launch competencies. The first commercial launch of the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle, ISRO's newly developed launcher commercially built by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, will happen this year. Also, the first-ever orbital launch of Skyroot Aerospace's Vikram-1 would happen in 2026, giving the Indian space programme two small-satellite launchers that could meet on-demand launch needs. Not to forget, the solid-fuelled small satellite launcher that the defence forces are building for their quick-reaction applications, but are tight-lipped about, popularly known as VEDA, would also see progress in 2026.

In 2026, ISRO will showcase various innovative indigenous space technologies, including the travelling-wave tube amplifier for advanced space communications, quantum key distribution for secure encrypted communications, and high-thrust electric propulsion systems designed for agile, manoeuvrable satellites and spacecraft for interplanetary and cislunar missions. Many of these advancements are expected to become standard features in Indian satellites and spacecraft in the future.

The trivial silos of civilian, commercial, and military space ambitions established in the past are fast disintegrating. A civil-military-fused space programme dedicated to India's strategic and security interests will emerge clearly in 2026.

The NDA government in Andhra Pradesh has criticised the statement made by Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy in the Assembly during a discussion on Krishna water, and accused the YSRCP of making meaningless allegations against AP Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu

Home Minister Amit Shah, with BJP Tamil Nadu president Nainar Nagenthran and others during 'Tamilagam Thalainimiria Payanam' yatra, in Tiruchirappalli | MK ASHOK KUMAR

DMK is the symbol of corruption in India, says Shah

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Pudukkottai

UNION Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday slammed the ruling DMK government as a symbol of corruption and accused it of routinely insulting the beliefs of Hindus. Charging that Chief Minister M K Stalin's "dream of making his son, Udhayanidhi Stalin, the next CM" will never come to pass, the senior BJP leader claimed that TN will reject this "one-family rule" and expressed confidence that the NDA will capture power in the state in the 2026 elections.

Addressing the closing ceremony of state BJP chief Nainar Nagendran's Tamilagam Thalai Nimira Tamilanin Payanam Yatra at Karuveppilan Gate in the district, Shah alleged that the DMK is "the most corrupt party in India", claiming that a DMK minister had continued to hold office for 243 days even after being jailed. He alleged that the party's leaders had been named in multiple cases ranging from a cash-for-jobs scam, money laundering to illegal sand mining and coal scams, and asked whether TN could progress under such a regime.

He alleged that every government scheme under the DMK regime carried a 20% commission and that the state's finances were being run solely on borrowings and liquor revenue.

Accusing the state government of a pattern of "insulting" Hindu beliefs in TN, Shah claimed that restrictions were imposed in TN during the inauguration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, comparisons of Sanatan Dharma to diseases such as dengue and malaria had been made by senior ruling party leaders (a reference to Deputy CM Udhayanidhi), and alleged — without specific examples — that Hindu religious processions had been stopped, and idol immersions barred. "By crossing constitutional limits, you are committing injustice against the Hindu community," he claimed.

Ahead of polls, TN hands out ₹3k dole

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Chennai

Even as major political parties have begun preparations for the Assembly elections scheduled for April-May this year, the Tamil Nadu government has announced a ₹3,000 cash gift -- the highest amount offered under the scheme so far — alongside a grocery hamper for 2.23 crore family rice ration cardholders ahead of the Pongal festival.

The state government has sanctioned ₹6,936.18 crore for the implementation of the Pongal gift scheme this year. The cash assistance will be distributed physically through ration shop employees. The beneficiaries will also receive one kilogram each of raw rice and sugar, along with a sugarcane. Further, 1.76 crore ration cardholders will be provided free dhotis and sarees.

Participants at Rekla Race, a traditional sport organised ahead of Pongal celebrations in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, on Sunday | S SENBAGAPANDIYAN

Chief Minister M K Stalin on Sunday said the ₹3,000 cash assistance would be provided to all rice ration cardholders, including families residing in Sri Lankan Tamil rehabilitation camps. According to official sources, the state has nearly 19,000 families living in rehabilitation camps. About 3.8 lakh sugar-only and no-commodity ration cards will not be eligible for the cash component.

A senior official from the food department said the government had scrutinised the linkage of ration cards with bank accounts two years ago and found that a significant number was not linked. "The cooperation department was asked to facilitate the opening of new bank accounts, but the process is yet to be completed," the official said, adding that the question of direct benefit transfer would arise only after all ration cards are linked to active bank accounts.

The practice of providing a cash gift during Pongal was first introduced in 1990 by then Chief Minister M Karunanidhi, who announced ₹100 for pensioners. This was increased to ₹150 in 1998. The distribution of cash assistance along with groceries to ration cardholders ahead of Pongal was first implemented in January 2014 by then Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa, who announced ₹100 in cash along with one kilogram each of raw rice and sugar.

CONSUMED BY FIRE

Burnt two-wheelers and debris seen at the parking area of Thrissur railway station following the fire incident. (Inset) The fire raging at the railway station | EXPRESS

Kerala Assembly to issue notification disqualifying MLA Raju

T'Puram: The legislature secretariat will issue a notification on the vacancy arising out of Antony Raju's disqualification. It will be issued after the secretariat receives a copy of the judgment convicting the former minister in an evidence-tampering case. The disqualification came into effect with the pronouncement of the judgment and the notification is a formal procedure, a source said. The secretariat will report the vacancy to the Election Commission of India. Antony Raju represented Thiruvananthapuram constituency. "This is a formal intimation. With less than six months left for the expiry of the tenure of the current assembly, there will be no by-election," the source added. ENS

Revanth consults Singhvi ahead of SC hearing on Polavaram links

ENS @ Hyderabad

AHEAD of the Supreme Court hearing on Monday, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy held consultations with senior advocate and Congress MP Abhishek Manu Singhvi to finalise Telangana's legal strategy against Andhra Pradesh's proposed Polavaram link projects.

The discussion, held in Mumbai, was also attended by Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy. The chief minister briefed Singhvi on the legal and technical aspects of the case, including the likely loss to Telangana and the impact on its share of Godavari waters, and asked that the arguments be presented effectively before the apex court. The focus was on opposing the Polavaram–Banakacherla and Polavaram–Nallamala Sagar link projects. Telangana has challenged the projects on the grounds that they violate interstate water-sharing agreements, provisions of the AP Reorganisation Act and existing tribunal awards. The state government has argued that the scope of the Polavaram project is being altered without consent.

In December 2025, the Telangana government filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court seeking a stay on the proposed link projects and directions restraining the AP government from preparing detailed project reports (DPRs) and inviting tenders. According to the petition, the Polavaram project was originally approved to utilise 80 tmcft of water, but AP is now planning to utilise nearly 200 tmcft by taking up the link projects, which Telangana says violates tribunal awards and infringes on the rights of its people.

First commercial validation flight lands at Bhogapuram Airport

Vizianagaram: The irst commercial validation flight successfully landed at the Alluri Sitarama Raju (Bhogapuram) Greenfield International Airport in Vizianagaram district at 11 am on Sunday, marking a major milestone towards the airport's operational readiness. Air India Airbus A320 aircraft (AI 3198) arrived from New Delhi. Union Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu, Vizianagaram MP Kalisetti Appala Naidu, and senior officials from the Airports Authority of India, DGCA, and GMR Group were on board the flight. Developed by the GMR Group with Larsen & Toubro executing the civil works, the airport is named after freedom fighter Alluri Sitarama Raju. Designed for round-the-clock operations, the facility will handle both domestic and international flights. Nearly 96% of construction work has been completed. ENS

India offers CAR-T therapy at 1/10 of global cost, yet most can't access it

GAYATHRI M KURUP @Bengaluru

AT a global cell therapy symposium in the city, oncologists said India offers CAR-T cell therapy at one-tenth the international price, but most Indians still struggle to access it due to limited insurance coverage and high out-of-pocket costs.

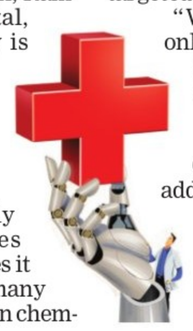
The therapy, which costs nearly Rs 4 crore in the US, is available for Rs 25–26 lakh in India. Calling it a major advantage yet still financially burdensome, Dr. Santhosh K Devdas, HOD & Consultant – Medical Oncology and Chief – Bone Marrow Transplant at Ramaiah Memorial Hospital, said many families simply cannot afford it despite the reduced price. He noted that CAR-T offers close to 50% cure rates in relapsed blood cancers and is far better tolerated than chemotherapy, especially among elderly patients or those with comorbidities. "The burden of CAR-T in India is still largely borne by patients themselves. By the time many patients reach CAR-T, they've already gone through multiple treatments and spent heavily. Adding an expensive therapy on top of that becomes a major barrier," added Dr. Nishit Ojha, Associate Consultant - Hematology & Hemato-Oncology, Fortis Hospital.

CAR-T cell therapy is an advanced treatment where a patient's own immune cells are modified to recognise and kill cancer. Doctors take a small amount of blood, re-engineer the T cells, and infuse them back. These strengthened cells then multiply in the body and target the cancer, explained Dr. Anoop P, Consultant Hematologist and BMT Specialist, Aster Hospitals, Bengaluru.

Adding to this, Dr. Rasmi Palassery, Consultant – Medical Oncology & BMT Physician, Ramaiah Memorial Hospital, added that the therapy is currently used for leukemia, lymphoma and myeloma, with research underway for solid tumors and autoimmune disorders.

"CAR-T targets only cancer cells and spares healthy ones. That makes it more specific and, in many cases, more effective than chemotherapy," she said, pointing out that in several countries, older patients are already receiving immunotherapy instead of chemotherapy.

Doctors noted that India's lower CAR-T therapy costs are attracting patients from the Middle East and SAARC nations who cannot afford treatment abroad. Dr. Sharat Damodar, Director - Adult Haemato Oncology & BMT at Narayana Health, said the demand is rising as cancer care becomes more accessible. "With CAR-T, cure rates are close to 50% in relapsed cases," he shared. Concluding that "cancer is no longer a death sentence," he highlighted the need for early detection and added that government schemes and public funding could further expand access, improving outcomes—especially for younger patients who benefit most from targeted therapies like CAR-T.



"Widening access will only be possible with support from public funding, inclusion in government schemes, or philanthropists and CSR organisations," added Dr. Revanth Boddu, Consultant – Hematology, Hemato-Oncology & Bone Marrow Transplant at Aster RV Hospital.

Vigilance report clears Satheesan of corruption, but flags FCRA issue

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ T'puram

TWO separate Vigilance findings relating to Opposition Leader VD Satheesan's role in the Punarjani flood-rehabilitation project have come out on Sunday, with the first report recommending CBI probe under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) while a later Vigilance communication states that no offence under the Prevention of Corruption Act has been found against him.

The reports concern funds raised in the United Kingdom in 2018-19 for Punarjani, a rehabilitation project launched in Paravur constituency following the 2018 floods. The project was implemented with the support of Manappat Foundation, a charitable trust registered under the FCRA. In the first report, which surfaced in the media on Sunday, the Vigilance lists Satheesan as a suspect and records that he urged participants at a UK event to contribute 500 pounds each to provide sewing machines to flood-affected women. The report cites a Video CD marked.

The report also details the explanation given by Manappat Foundation that funds collected by Midland International Aid Trust in the UK were transferred to its FCRA account, that a separate account was opened for the Punarjani project, and that BPCL later provided Rs 31.2 lakh under CSR funding which was fully used to procure sewing machines.

The foundation stated that it incurred a total expenditure of Rs 1.31 crore, disbursed cheques directly to identified beneficiaries, and ultimately spent Rs 4.74 lakh more than the funds received. It also maintained that no financial assistance was ever provided to Satheesan personally and that the MLA was invited to the UK only to present the project model.

The Vigilance report concludes that Satheesan's involvement constituted a violation of Section 3(2)(a) of the FCRA, which restricts elected representatives from receiving foreign contributions. The report therefore recommends that the CBI examine the matter and also suggests that the Speaker of the Assembly be notified regarding a possible violation of legislative conduct rules.

Diabetic retinopathy rising among youth

GAYATHRI M KURUP @Bengaluru

ACROSS Bengaluru and several other cities, ophthalmologists reported that there is a steady rise in diabetic retinopathy among children and young adults, mirroring the country's surge in early-onset diabetes.

Dr Bhavya Reddy, consultant ophthalmologist at Aster Whitefield, calls the trend "a clear shift" from what the profession saw even a decade ago. "Today, with increasing childhood obesity and more sedentary lifestyles, we're definitely seeing more cases than before," she says. "In most early-stage cases, children have no symptoms at all. The damage becomes noticeable only when it reaches sight-threatening stages like macular oedema, vitreous haemorrhage or retinal detachment." She explained that the risk is tied more to the duration of diabetes and poor glycaemic control rather than age or gender. "Children diagnosed earlier and those with uncontrolled HbA1c levels are far more vulnerable. Coexisting conditions such as hypertension or lipid disorders also raise the risk," she added.

Dr Divyansh K Mishra, VR ocular oncology, vitreoretinal services, Sankara Eye Hospital, who has been observing rising eye complaints in younger people, said lifestyle is worsening vulnerabilities. "Dry eyes have become increasingly common in the younger population, especially those with longer screen time," he noted.

Dr Vikas Jain, Group COO, ASG Eye Hospitals, said the rise in retinopathy directly reflects India's childhood diabetes crisis. "Lifestyle shifts, high-calorie diets, ultra-processed foods, and reduced physical activity are causing adolescents to develop type-2 diabetes earlier," he explained. "Rapid glucose fluctuations and chronic hyperglycaemia accelerate microvascular retinal damage."

CRIME PATROL

2 workers killed as stone collapse in illegal quarry

Bhubaneswar/Dhenkanal: Two workers were killed after a large stone fell on them at an illegal stone quarry at Gopalpur village under Motanga police limits in Odisha's Dhenkanal district on Saturday evening. The deceased were Abhi Singh of Balasore and Budhu Munda of Keonjhar. The incident occurred while the workers were engaged in drilling operations prior to blasting. Teams of the Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force and the Odisha Fire and Emergency Service were rushed to the site soon after the accident. ENS

3-yr-old drowns in gated community pool in Hyd

Hyderabad: A three-year-old boy died after accidentally falling into a swimming pool at a gated community under the KPHB police station limits on Sunday morning. The victim was identified as Arjun. Police said the boy's pare-nts, residents of Gajularama-ram, had left him at his grandmo-ther's house on Saturday night. Around 7.30 am on Sunday, Arjun accompanied his grandparents on their routine walk within the Vertex Premio apartment premises. While playing near the swimming pool, he reportedly slipped and fell into the water. ENS

PLANTATIONS, PINEAPPLE AND A PERFECT ROLL

RAJESH RAVI @Kochi

DECADES ago, native bakers took the European Swiss roll and quietly gave it a local soul. Out went expensive creams and imported fruit preserves. In came tangy, homemade pineapple jam. The sponge remained light and airy, but the flavours turned unmistakably tropical. What began as a practical adjustment soon became a signature.

That freewheeling adaptation did not fade with time. It thrived. From glass jars on wooden shelves in old bakeries, the humble jam roll rolled its way into Instagram feeds and nostalgia lists. In central Kerala—especially the plantation belt—it became more than a snack. It became a

memory, wrapped in grease paper and childhood afternoons.

Joy Abraham Kallivayalil, a retired engineer and keen chronicler of local history, traces its roots to a specific social setting. "Most native bakers learned the craft from Europeans. They flourished in areas with Christian planters who were used to bread and baked products."

One bakery that rode this wave was SAC Bakers in Kanjirappally, founded by Kunju Ashan. The location was no accident. Rubber plantations were expanding, and planters accustomed to English food habits were settling in the region. "The growth of Kunju's bakery had much to do with the growth of rubber plantations," Joy said. Among all its products, jam rolls emerged as star.

"My father was from Thrissur," says K K Jayan, Kunju's son. "He started his first bakery in Mundakkayam and later moved to Kanjirappally in 1931." In the early days, plum cakes and jam rolls dominated sales. Soon, the jam roll took centre stage.

Kunju was no novice. He learned the trade from British Bakers in Ceylon and worked briefly in Madras. But Kerala demanded a rethink.

Kunju used local fruit, employed villagers and baked in wood-fired ovens lined with coconut shells. The method was traditional; the result distinctive. "A bite of that roll—the soft, moist sponge folded over golden pineapple jam with tiny chunks—would light up the palate," he recalls.

Jayan points out that the jam used in the rolls is different from table spreads. "The texture and viscosity are not meant for spreading," he says. Even the pineapple varieties differ. The success of the pineapple jam roll later led to experiments with strawberry and other locally available fillings.

EDITORIAL

How is the world ruled and led to war? Diplomats lie to journalists and believe these lies when they see them in print — Karl Kraus

INDIAN EXPRESS IS NOT AN INDUSTRY. IT IS A MISSION.

— Ramnath Goenka

POWER TRUMPS PRINCIPLE IN U.S. VENEZUELA ACTION, RATTLES GLOBAL ORDER

THE US military strike on Venezuela and the capture of President Nicolás Maduro have sent shockwaves worldwide, reigniting doubts about the credibility of the so-called rules-based international order. In this instance, power, not any principle, appears to be the decisive factor. Regardless of Maduro's governance failures, the US operation clearly violates Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, which forbids the use of force against another state's sovereignty. In legal terms, it is an act of aggression.

There was no authorisation from the UN Security Council, and the claim of self-defence is unconvincing. No evidence has been presented to suggest that Venezuela posed an imminent threat to the US. Characterising Maduro as the head of a "narco-terrorist" network, which is central to Washington's narrative, does not in itself establish a lawful basis for the use of force or justify a regime-change operation under international law.

Unsurprisingly, the operation is being read through the prism of America's long and uneasy history of intervention in Latin America. The most immediate parallel is Panama in 1989, when US forces captured President Manuel Noriega, also indicted on drug-trafficking charges, and oversaw the installation of a new government. That precedent hangs heavily over Venezuela, reinforcing perceptions that this was less an exceptional response than a familiar assertion of power. Donald Trump's own words strengthened that impression. Speaking about Maduro's capture and suggesting that the US would "run" Venezuela during a transition, Trump framed the episode not as a limited security operation but as a decisive act of control.

Washington has sought to justify its actions by portraying Venezuela as a cartel state posing a direct threat to US security. This narrative exaggerates the danger and stretches the concept of self-defence. Looming over Trump's arguments are Venezuela's oil reserves, the world's largest, a factor that continues to fuel scepticism about Washington's true motives.

Many Venezuelans may not mourn the removal of a leader who presided over economic collapse and political repression. But the manner of his removal cannot be condoned. Toppling a foreign government by force sits uneasily with Trump's earlier promise to end regime-change interventions after the costly failures of Iraq and Afghanistan. If the US now asserts the right to seize leaders and govern other nations at will, the international order it once upheld is not merely under strain. It is being deliberately dismantled.

ANTONY RAJU VERDICT: TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE

FORMER Kerala minister Antony Raju, a member of the ruling LDF, now stands disqualified as a legislator and faces the prospect of being banned from contesting elections for years. This follows his conviction for tampering with evidence in a 35-year-old narcotics case in which he was on the legal team defending the accused. He was sentenced to three years in jail, which means he is disqualified as an MLA under Section 8(3) of the Representation of the People Act. This is a moral blow that the CPI(M)-led LDF, reeling under the impact of the shocking setback in the recent local body elections, will have to contend with as it prepares for the assembly elections due in a couple of months.

The case dates back to 1990 when an Australian citizen, Andrew Salvatore Cervelli, was arrested for smuggling a narcotic substance hidden in his underwear. The piece of clothing, naturally, became material evidence. After being convicted, Cervelli approached the Kerala High Court, which in 1991 acquitted him after finding that the underwear produced as evidence was too small to fit him. A probe revealed that the clothing had been cut and re-stitched to make it smaller. It was also revealed that Raju, a lawyer for the accused, had taken the underwear from the court's custody with the connivance of a court clerk and returned it. Subsequently, Raju and the clerk were booked and charged.

The case, while underlining the deterioration of ethical standards and principles in political life, also exposes abuse of the judicial process. The verdict has come 31 long years after the evidence tampering case was registered and 19 years after the charges were filed. During the time he was dodging justice, Raju became a legislator twice and also served as a minister, handling the important transport portfolio in the second Pinarayi Vijayan government, before being replaced mid-term as part of an internal alliance deal. Raju's conviction establishes the disturbing fact that a man caught smuggling contraband has escaped punishment because some people were able to efficiently meddle with evidence on his behalf. The long arm of the law has caught up with Raju at last, but the long delay diminishes both the scale and scope of his punishment. The case emphasises the need for urgent intervention to fix the cracks in the criminal justice system.

QUICK TAKE

CUDDLES AND CLOUT

THE new year opens on a panda note, reminding the world how Beijing wields soft power. France will receive a pair of the furballs in 2027 on a decade-long loan sealed during Emmanuel Macron's China visit. Japan, meanwhile, prepares to bid farewell to twins Xiao Xiao and Lei Lei, their return hastened amid tensions sparked by Sanae Takaichi's Taiwan remarks. Japan's loss looks like France's gain. Pandas have long lubricated China's ties: from Chiang Kai-shek's 1941 gift to America and Mao's Cold War offerings to post-1972 normalisation with Japan. Chinese panda loans are costly and strategic, often shadowing trade and ties. Pandas, after all, sit on both sides of Chinese diplomacy—soft-power ambassadors one day, soft casualties the next.

The 2004 tsunami forced Sri Lanka to set up disaster preparedness mechanisms. But Cyclone Ditwah exposed that much more needs to be done, especially on transparency of aid flows

THE PEOPLE MUST KNOW WHO'S GETTING DISASTER AID & WHY

DILRUKSHI HANDUNNETTI

Award-winning journalist and lawyer; founder and director of the Colombo-based Center for Investigative Reporting

CYCLONE Ditwah has brought Sri Lanka's disaster preparedness under serious scrutiny and resulted in blistering attacks on the administration for a weak disaster response, including delayed warnings and relief distribution. More than two decades after the 2004 tsunami, there still are serious gaps to be addressed.

The scale of the disaster was unprecedented and unpredictable. However, there were resources to issue early warnings in local languages and evacuate people early to minimise the impact. But even till date there are people claiming to have not received any relief.

Since its creation in 2005, the country's Disaster Management Centre (DMC) has evolved and currently possesses a robust multi-hazard National Early Warning System for Sri Lanka. The DMC is the primary agency responsible for coordinated response and the National Disaster Relief Services Centre for the actual distribution of relief goods. In 2023, the DMC made an important policy shift by adopting the National Disaster Management Plan 2023-30, moving away from a response-based approach towards a proactive and integrated risk management strategy.

This year dawned with the appointment of a 25-member presidential task force (PTF) for rebuilding Sri Lanka, mandated to undertake strategic decisions, resolve cross-ministerial issues, and guide major funding and reconstruction choices in key rebuilding activities. The tasks include establishing digital data systems and decision support mechanisms, and improving communication and stakeholder engagement. The PTF, which has an enormous responsibility, should learn from the unforgettable post-tsunami lessons as well as current realities.

There was the 2005 Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure—a temporary mechanism established to coordinate relief distribution and reconstruction efforts in the coastal areas of north and east Sri Lanka.

In March 2005, a concept note developed by LIRNEasia, a Colombo-based research institute, famously called for designing an all-hazard public warning system in the tsunami's aftermath. It stated: "Prompt action to create an effective national early warning system is the best memorial we can build to the 40,000 valuable lives that were swept away for the lack of a few minutes of warning and a little awareness," and added, "Public warning is a system, not a technology."

Much water had flowed since then. But 21 years later, Sri Lanka is back to the drawing boards to create systems and processes for post-disaster rebuilding.

SOURAV ROY

When the tsunami struck, Sri Lanka was unprepared. From disaster communications and relief distribution to aid flow management, it called for new policies and mechanisms. This is no longer the case, with a comprehensive disaster management strategy and mechanisms in place.

Fast forward to 2026, the foremost reality is Sri Lanka's shaky economic situation. Following the 2022 economic crisis, the country is under a restructuring programme scripted by the IMF and has no room to navigate. It is in this backdrop that opposition leader Sajith Premadasa has urged the IMF to relax the stringent conditions of the ongoing extended fund facility to enable the government to prioritise urgent relief, recovery and livelihood restoration. Premadasa also urged the government to withdraw the current budget and present a fresh disaster-focused plan. Meanwhile, plans are afoot to apply for relief from the UN's new loss and damage fund, designed to help climate-vulnerable developing nations deal with severe and unavoidable climate change impacts.

The Global Climate Risk Index has consistently ranked Sri Lanka among the top 10 countries most vulnerable to extreme weather events. In 2021, the Index for Risk Mapping ranked the island 'high' for catastrophe risk. This too is an unavoidable reality.

The World Bank estimated the total damage caused by Cyclone Ditwah at $4.1 billion—4 percent of Sri Lanka's 2024 national income. All 25 districts were impacted, while the central regions suffered more than 1,200 landslides. The devastation rendered almost 70 percent of the rail network unusable, necessitating an extensive reconstruction.

A comprehensive disaster management mechanism would include transparent tracking of aid flows in conformity with global standards. This is essential to prevent undue influence on humanitarian operations, be they political, economic or military. Integrity of the process is considered as vital as efficiency.

Transparent aid flow management with room for participatory decision making, transparent procurement and community participation are key aspects of recognised disaster management mechanisms. Sri Lanka must strengthen its surge capacity, ensuring it can rapidly expand resources and operations when faced with an emergency.

Disasters open the floodgates to corruption and not just aid, procurement processes should be transparent and accountable too. The International Aid Transparency Initiative is a case in point, which made aid information available to people in a timely, comparable and accessible manner. Sri Lankans still recall a financial and political scandal in 2005 when funds intended for tsunami relief were purportedly diverted to a private bank account to benefit one district. Popularly called 'Helping Hambantota', former president Mahinda Rajapaksa's home district, it turned into a case study of aid-related corruption.

It is mandatory to avoid any repeats and to retain public trust. A comprehensive and accessible system will be invaluable for Sri Lanka and must be prioritised.

At present, Sri Lanka relies on multiple tools to monitor humanitarian aid. Examples include International Organization for Migration's Displacement Tracking Matrix, Relief Web's interface for tracking population movement, and UN's Financial Tracking Service. They specialise in supply chain management to track physical distribution of goods, while systems like Core Humanitarian Standard focuses on needs, resource allocations and transparent delivery, especially post disaster.

Aid flow information must be publicly available not only for transparency, but as a practice that benefits the public. Ensuring transparency, offering real-time information on transactions and their movement—overall commitments, disbursements, target sectors and the criteria for prioritisation are necessary. People look for equitable treatment—not the kind offered via viral videos of victim families ceremonially receiving death certificates.

(Views are personal)
(dilrukshi@cir.lk)

ALI, WHO UNITES THE BELIEVERS

RENUKA NARAYANAN

FAITHLINE

SINCE Iran is in the news and since Hazrat Ali's birthday, or Wiladat-e-Maula Ali, fell on January 2 this year in India, I thought it would be interesting to talk about him this week. Who was Hazrat Ali? Ali ibn Abu Talib was born around 600 CE in Mecca. Some say he was born inside the Kaaba, the holiest site of Islam, and that he was the only such person in history. He was the cousin and son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad. He is revered as the first Imam by Shia Muslims and as the fourth Rashidun Caliph by Sunni Muslims. Khulafa-e-Rashideen or Rashidun means the 'Rightly Guided Successors' or 'Rightly Guided Caliphs', referring to the first four caliphs who led the Muslim community in Arabia after Prophet Muhammad's death. They were Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali.

Of the four, only the first, Abu Bakr, died a natural death. The others were assassinated, including Hazrat Ali in 661 CE. As the son of the Prophet's uncle, Abu Talib, he grew up under the Prophet's care after a famine. He later married the Prophet's daughter, Fatima, and became his son-in-law. After her death, he had eight other wives in all and several slave women who bore him children. He was a close follower of the Prophet and renowned as a great warrior in the cause of Islam.

Shia Muslims consider Ali to be the only legitimate immediate successor to the Prophet of Islam, hence their rift with Sunnis. Iran is almost ninety-five percent a Shia country.

Many in India would have heard the song '*Man kunto maula fa-haza Ali un maula*'. It is traced back to an incident in a Hadith. The Hadiths were originally oral traditions, later recorded as sayings or actions of the Prophet. They were written around 200 years after his passing. This Hadith goes that after his final pilgrimage in March 632 CE, the Prophet stopped at Ghadir Khumm, an oasis, also referred to as the Pond of Khumm, and gathered a large crowd of Muslims. He then made the declaration, "Man kunto maula fa-haza Ali un maula," meaning 'Whoever accepts me as a master, Ali is his master too.' The word *maula* or *mawla* is Arabic and is used with masculine names. It means 'master' or 'guardian'.

These words took on another dimension in India in the 13th century. They were woven into a famous qawwali, a form of Sufi devotional music, by the Delhi poet, Amir Khusro. He was a follower of the Sufi saint Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya and is often credited as the 'father of qawwali'. He introduced a fusion of Persian, Arabic, Turkish, and Indian musical traditions known as Khusrawi mausiqi, or Khusro-made music. Khusro's song is considered the first ever qawwali, and it's classified as a manqabat, a song sung chiefly in praise of Hazrat Ali and other Islamic holy figures. I have heard the song begin with the widely used phrase for Hazrat Ali, '*Shah-e-Mardan, Sher-e-Yazdan, Quwwat-e-Parvardigar*', meaning 'King of the brave, the lion of God, the strength of the Creator'. This song is sung in both Shia and Sunni gatherings.

X.COM

What started as a rift of succession between the Sunni and Shia sects of Islam got woven into a melodious tradition of devotional music in India through Sufi syncretism. Thirteenth-century poet Amir Khusro's qawwali in Hazrat Ali's honour today gets hummed in gatherings of both sects

Was Amir Khusro Sunni or Shia? We know he was born in 1253 in Patiyali, Kasganj district in modern-day Uttar Pradesh, in what was then the Delhi Sultanate, as the son of Amir Saifud-Din Mahmud, a man of Turkic extraction, and Bibi Daulat Naz, a converted Indian lady. Amir Khusro's father was reportedly a Sunni. Khusro's murshid, or guru, Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, was also a Sunni Sufi saint of the Chisti order. He followed mainstream Sunni Islam while practising the mystical Sufi tradition.

I once heard two 20th-century stalwarts of Hindustani music, both Sunni, spontaneously break into this song. They were Ustad Bismillah Khan, the shehnai *vidwan*, and dhrupad maestro Ustad Fahimuddin Dagar, of the famous Dagar lineage of musicians.

I mentioned that Hazrat Ali was known as a great fighter. His sword, Zulfiqar, is legendary. It had a split blade, and West Asian weapons are apparently commonly inscribed with a quote invoking Zulfiqar. Zulfiqar was frequently depicted on Ottoman flags, especially those used by the Janissaries, the elite soldiers. A ceremonial version is on display at the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul.

An interesting story I heard concerns Zulfiqar and the Mughal princess Zebunissa. She was Aurangzeb's eldest child, who wrote poetry under the pen-name 'Makhfi', meaning 'the concealed one'. Though she was his favourite child for years, she fell calamitously from her father's good graces. She was imprisoned for twenty years in grim Salimgarh Fort next to the Red Fort for supposedly helping a rebellious younger brother.

But this story was before that. Zebunissa was allowed to interact with foreign poets from behind a curtain. An Iranian, Nasir Ali, perhaps emboldened by the fact that Zebunissa's mother was also Iranian, spoke more familiarly than was acceptable to a Mughal princess. In a cold voice, Zebunissa said in Persian, "Nasir Ali, *ba naam e Ali deeda-e-panah. Varna ba Zulfiqar-e-Ali sar bureeda mat.*"

Meaning, "Nasir Ali, by the name of Ali (in your name), you're seeing a pardon. Or else, your head would have been taken off by Zulfiqar, the sword of Ali." As royal rebuffs go, you can feel the freeze even after three centuries.

I would like to conclude with a saying attributed to Hazrat Ali. It goes, "When you are destitute, trade with Allah through charity". This could apply to anyone, don't you think, as a way of being? To 'trade' with God by giving?

(Views are personal)
(shebaba09@gmail.com)

MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

Quiet reform

Ref: *Celebrating a sage for the ages* (Jan 4). The author's tribute deftly rescues Sree Narayana Guru from regional reverence into national relevance. By foregrounding his ethical clarity over ritual and unity over identity, the piece reminds us that social reform is not an event but a practice. In an India noisy with difference, the quiet radicalism feels urgently contemporary.
K Chidanand Kumar, Bengaluru

Family time

Ref: *Time for resolution on rest* (Jan 4). Rest is one of the most essential needs of the human body; it keeps the mind fresh and enjoyable. Work pressure should not prevent us from taking time away, and well-spent time with family must be valued.
Adnan V K, Kozhikode

Venezuela's sovereignty

Ref: *US snatches Maduro* (Jan 4). The incident poses a serious question: what if Russia and China did the same to the Ukrainian and Thai presidents? Even if Maduro is convicted of drug cartelisation charges, countries must respect others' sovereignty and freedom.
Muhammed Ajmal, Kozhikode

Colonial echoes

True sovereignty cannot be gifted by a foreign military; it must be reclaimed by the people. While Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro's leadership was fraught, a foreign power "running" a sovereign nation evokes dark historical echoes of colonialism. US President Donald Trump's focus on oil infrastructure suggests that economic extraction, rather than democratic restoration, is the move's primary motive.
Vijaykumar H K, Raichur

Cricket scapegoat

Ref: *KKR drop Bangladesh player* (Jan 4). One would wholly agree with Shashi Tharoor that cricket should not be made to "bear the burden for attacks on minorities". A cricketer should not be made the scapegoat. Steps like this will only widen the ill-timed differences between India and Bangladesh.
N Rama Rao, email

Aravalli's future

Ref: *Aravillis, a new turn in ecology battle* (Jan 4). It's alarming how aggressively real-estate interests push to erase ecological safeguards, aided by officials who prioritise profit over truth. By distorting facts, they try to drown out the voices defending our last remaining natural barriers.
Komala Brunschwig, email

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POSTS OF THE DAY

Amit Malviya @amitmalviya
Now illegal Bangladeshis who are Mamata Banerjee's vote bank, are also assaulting them! This is a gross violation of human rights and human dignity!

D Raja @ComradeDRaja
The Government of India must join the voices of countries across the world condemning US aggression and stand firmly with Venezuela.

Abhishek Banerjee @abhishekaitc
In 2026, those very women you want caged will march to the polling booths in millions and bury your regressive, Bangla-Birodhi, Nari-Birodhi politics forever.

Somnath Swabhiman Parv: 1,000 years of unbroken faith

Barbarians, like Mahmud of Ghazni, who attacked Somnath Temple are now dust in the wind, while the shrine stands bright as the wisdom of Indian civilisation

OPINION

NARENDRA MODI
Prime Minister of India, and Chairman of Shree Somnath Trust

SOMNATH...hearing this word instils a sense of pride in our hearts and minds. It is the eternal proclamation of India's soul. This majestic Temple is situated on the Western coast of India in Gujarat, at a place called Prabhas Patan. The Dwadasha Jyotirling Stotram mentions the 12 Jyotirlings across India. The Stotram begins with "सौराष्ट्रे सोमनाथं च..", symbolising the civilisational and spiritual importance of Somnath as the first Jyotirling.

It is also said:
सोमलिङ्गं नरो दृष्ट्वा सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते।
लभते फलं मनोवाञ्छितं मृतः स्वर्गं समाश्रयेत्॥

It means: Just the sight of Somnath Shivling ensures that a person is freed of sins, achieves their righteous desires and attains heaven after death.

Tragically, this very Somnath, which drew the reverence and prayers of millions, was attacked by foreign invaders, whose agenda was demolition, not devotion.

The year 2026 is significant for the Somnath Temple. It has been 1,000 years since the first attack on this great shrine. It was in January of 1026 that Mahmud of Ghazni attacked this Temple, seeking to destroy a great symbol of faith and civilisation, through a violent and barbaric invasion.

Yet, one thousand years later, the Temple stands as glorious as ever because of numerous efforts to restore Somnath to its grandeur. One such milestone completes 75 years in 2026. It was during a ceremony on May 11th 1951, in the presence of the then President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, that the restored Temple opened its doors to devotees.

The first invasion of Somnath a thousand years ago in 1026, the cruelty that was unleashed upon the people of the town and the devastation that was inflicted upon the shrine have been documented in great detail in various historical accounts. When you read them, the heart trembles. Each line carries the weight of grief, cruelty and a sorrow that refuses to fade with time.

Imagine the impact it had on Bharat and the morale of the people. After all, Somnath had great spiritual significance. It was also on the coast, giving strength to a society with great economic prowess, whose sea traders and seafarers carried tales of its grandeur far and wide.

Yet, I am proud to state unequivocally that the story of Somnath, a thousand years after the first attack, is not defined by destruction. It is defined by the unbreakable courage of crores of children of Bharat Mata.

The medieval barbarism that began a thousand years ago in 1026 went on to 'inspire' others to repeatedly attack Somnath. It was the start of an attempt to enslave our people and culture. But, each time the Temple was attacked, we also had great men and women who stood up to defend it and even made the ultimate sacrifice. And every single time, generation after generation, the people of our great civilisation picked themselves up, rebuilt and rejuvenated the Temple. It is our privilege to have been nurtured by the same soil that has nurtured greats like Ahilyabai Holkar, who made a noble attempt to ensure devotees can pray at Somnath.

In the 1890s, Swami Vivekananda visited Somnath and that experience moved him. He expressed his feelings during a lecture in Chennai in 1897 when he said, "Some of these old temples of Southern India and those like Somnath of Gujarat will teach you volumes of wisdom, will give you a keener insight into the history of the race than any amount of books. Mark how these temples bear the marks of a hundred attacks and a hundred regenerations, continually destroyed and continually springing up out of the ruins, rejuvenated and strong as ever! That is the national mind, that is the national life-current. Follow it and it leads to glory. Give it up and you die; death will be the only result, annihilation, the only effect, the moment you step beyond that life current."

The medieval barbarism that began a thousand years ago in 1026 went on to 'inspire' others to repeatedly attack Somnath. It was the start of an attempt to enslave our people and culture. But, each time the Temple was attacked, we also had great men and women who stood up to defend it and even made the ultimate sacrifice

The sacred duty of rebuilding the Somnath Temple after independence came to the able hands of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. A visit during Diwali time in 1947 moved him so much that he announced that the Temple will be rebuilt there. Finally, on May 11th 1951, a grand Temple in Somnath opened its doors to devotees and Dr. Rajendra Prasad was present there. The great Sardar Sahib was not alive to see this historic day, but the fulfilment of his dream stood tall before the nation. The then Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, was not too enthused with this development. He did not want the Honourable President as well as Ministers to associate with this special event. He said that this event created a bad impression of India. But Dr. Rajendra Prasad stood firm and the rest is history. No mention of Somnath is complete without recalling the efforts of KM Munshi, who supported Sardar Patel very effectively. His works on Somnath, including the book, 'Somanatha: The Shrine Eternal', are extremely informative and educative.

Indeed, as the title of Munshi Ji's book conveys, we are a civilisation that carries a sense of conviction about the eternity of spirit and of ideas. We firmly believe that that which is eternal is indestructible, as outlined in the famous Gita verse "नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि...". There can be no better example of our civilisation's indomitable spirit than Somnath, which stands gloriously, overcoming odds and struggles.

It is this same spirit that is visible in our nation, one of the brightest spots of global growth, having overcome centuries of invasions and colonial loot. It is our value systems and the determination of our people that have made India the centre of global attention today. The world is seeing India with hope and optimism. They want to invest in our innovative youngsters. Our art, culture, music and several festivals are going global. Yoga and Ayurveda are making a worldwide impact, boosting healthy living. Solutions to some of the most pressing global challenges are coming from India.

Since time immemorial, Somnath has brought together people from different walks of life. Centuries ago, Kalikal Sarvagna Hemchandracharya, a respected Jain monk, came to Somnath. It is said that after praying there, he recited a verse, "भवबीजाङ्कुरजनना रागाद्याः क्षयमुपगता यस्य।". It means - Salutations to That One in whom the seeds of worldly becoming are destroyed, in whom passion and all afflictions have withered away." Today, Somnath holds the same ability to awaken something profound within the mind and soul.

A thousand years after the first attack in 1026, the sea at Somnath still roars with the same intensity as it did back then. The waves that wash the shores of Somnath tell a story. No matter what, just like the waves, it kept rising again and again.

The aggressors of the past are now dust in the wind, their names synonymous with destruction. They are footnotes in the annals of history, while Somnath stands bright, radiating far beyond the horizon, reminding us of the eternal spirit that remained undiminished by the attack of 1026. Somnath is a song of hope that tells us that while hate and fanaticism may have the power to destroy for a moment, faith and conviction in the power of goodness have the power to create for eternity.

If the Somnath Temple, which was attacked a thousand years ago and faced continuous attacks thereon, could rise again and again, then we can surely restore our great nation to the glory it embodied a thousand years ago before the invasions. With the blessings of Shree Somnath Mahadev, we move forward with a renewed resolve to build a Viksit Bharat, where civilisational wisdom guides us to work for the welfare of the whole world.

Jai Somnath!

Cong misleading people on G-RAM-G scheme: Shivraj

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

RURAL Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday accused the Congress of spreading "misinformation" about the VB-G-RAM-G scheme, which he said has been updated with features that benefit the poor. He alleged that corruption had been widespread under MGNREGA and claimed that resistance to the new scheme by Congress and other Opposition parties was driven by politics.

Speaking to the media, Chouhan criticised the Congress after it announced a campaign against the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission-Gramin (VB-G-RAM-G) starting from January 10. He questioned the absence of Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi from the Lok Sabha during a debate on the issue.

Terming the Congress's planned campaign an "attempt to protect corruption", Chouhan said the party's announced 'MGNREGA Bachao Sangram' was effectively a campaign to shield wrongdoing. He charged the Congress with presiding over large-scale irregularities, stating, "MGNREGA had become synonymous with corruption. Under social audits done by gram sabhas, there were more than 10,51,000 complaints. Same work was repeated, work was done by machine, and money was siphoned in the name of cleaning canals, roads. Thirty percent workers were above 60 years".

Protest an 'attempt to protect corruption'

Terming the Congress's planned campaign an "attempt to protect corruption", Chouhan said the party's announced 'MGNREGA Bachao Sangram' was effectively a campaign to shield wrongdoing. He further said that government had allocated significantly more funds to rural employment, adding that over ₹8, 48,000 crore had been provided.

He further said that the Modi government had allocated significantly more funds to rural employment, adding that over ₹8, 48,000 crore had been provided compared to just over ₹2 lakh crore during the UPA regime.

He maintained that the interests of workers have now been better safeguarded under the new scheme and announced that ₹1, 51,282 crore would be allocated for the programme in the next financial year, with over ₹95,600 crore coming from the Centre. He added that there would be no shortage of funds to guarantee 125 days of work.

The Opposition has been protesting against the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission Bill, or VB-G-RAM-G, which was passed by voice vote in the Rajya Sabha amid protests on December 21, 2025, just hours after being cleared by the Lok Sabha. President Droupadi Murmu gave her assent to the Bill on December 21, turning it into an Act that replaces MGNREGA.

Pak's ISI continues to spy in India: Agencies ask govt to warn forces

MUKESH RANJAN @ New Delhi

INTELLIGENCE agencies, in their report to the government, have warned that Pakistan's external spy agency ISI is contnuing with its efforts to expand espionage network in India, and suggested that the country's forces should be on high alert in view of this.

In the report, sources said, the agencies noted that even though many such spying attempts were foiled in the recent past, operatives backed by the ISI "are still active in the country to expand their network and its agents are also running a massive disinformation campaign against India".

According to the sources, the ISI has also been planning to rope in people and organisations to carry out protests questioning government policies. "This, the enemy country has planned as part of its larger game plan to create disturbances in India and bleed it with terror incidents as home grown as possible, so that Pakistan would have the deniability factor," an intelligence source said.

The larger plan also includes setting up of home-grown terror modules, like the one busted in Faridabad recently, the sources said.

According to intelligence input, sources said, Pakistan has no immediate plan to push terrorists from across the borders, as post 'Operation Sindoor', most of their terror facilities are down. In addition to its India plans, the ISI is also giving a lot of emphasis to Bangladesh, where it wants to set up launch pads to hit the northeastern states, another source said.

Pakistan is also looking at engineering something on the lines of Bangladesh and Nepal, where protests erupt across the country where a regime change would be demanded and they have launched a campaign with an aim to defame the Indian armed forces, so that the trust factor goes down.

While honey-trapping would be the main tactic, the ISI is also looking for suitable people with ideological leanings, the sources said, adding that for all these activites the ISI is trying to pump in a lot of money.

INSIDER TRACK

Uniform anti-terror policy in works

A quiet but significant push is underway on the internal security front. Acting on directions from Union Home Minister Amit Shah, officials in the home ministry, in consultation with the NIA, are working to frame a unified anti-terror policy. The aim is to bring clarity and uniformity on how terror-related cases are handled across the country. The message was conveyed during the recent DGP/IGP conference in Nava Raipur, attended by the Prime Minister, Home Minister, NSA Ajit Doval and police chiefs from all states and Union territories. The sense of urgency has grown after a recent terror incident in which well-educated people were allegedly involved—prompting a rethink on existing approaches and coordination.

No more delays on property papers

The government has gently, but firmly, told IAS officers that putting off the annual immovable property return (IPR) paperwork is no longer an option. A recent circular makes it clear that delays in submitting the IPR can now cost more than just a polite reminder. Promotions may be stalled, and disciplinary action is very much on the table. To be fair, the rule itself isn't new. IAS officers have always been required to file details of their immovable property by January 31 every year. What has changed is the seriousness with which delays are now being viewed. The Department of Personnel and Training has spelt it out in plain terms—missing the deadline is considered a "good and sufficient reason" to initiate action. In practical terms, this means officers who procrastinate or simply forget could find their career progression temporarily frozen, regardless of seniority or performance. The message is clear enough for the babus. Transparency is not optional and this paperwork must be completed.

Vande Bharat keeps Bihar waiting

The first rake of India's high-speed Vande Bharat sleeper train has finally rolled out. But not quite where it was once expected. Instead of Bihar, the honour has gone to poll-bound West Bengal and Assam, a move many see as neatly timed with upcoming Assembly elections. The sudden change has left even BJP and NDA leaders in Bihar quietly scratching their heads. No one is complaining on record, of course. But in private, leaders admit the diversion has raised uncomfortable questions about earlier promises made to the state. There is a shared worry that if a second rake is not soon announced for the Patna–New Delhi route, the RJD will have a ready-made political issue on its hands. For now, NDA leaders are choosing caution over candour, careful not to sound critical of the Prime Minister's decision to flag off the first service between Guwahati and Kolkata. Their dilemma is summed up in a line doing the rounds: no quarrel with Vande Bengal—but when will it be Vande Bihar?

Backroom lessons for BJP MPs' aides

Even personal assistants of BJP MPs aren't quite off the hook when it comes to a little schooling. Yes, next week, they are heading into a three-day training programme on discipline, work ethics, and behavioural orientation in a gentle nudge to keep "power syndrome" at bay. The sessions will also cover the bigger picture of Viksit Bharat, along with practical tips on communicating without drama, coordinating with stakeholders, and handling sensitive situations like pros. In short, it's a reminder that even behind-the-scenes movers can't just wing it. Humility, accountability, and basic professionalism are still very much on the syllabus. A little polish never hurts, even for a personal assistant for sure.

Rlys plans AI cameras to locate wildlife from 500m away to curb track mishaps

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

THE Railways is working closely with experts to develop an AI-driven high-powered camera system to capture images of wild animals such as elephants and lions when they cross railway tracks or remain in close proximity, even at deep night.

Once developed, the AI-enabled cameras will be able to capture images from half a kilometre away of wildlife animals, or their movement towards rail lines in forest areas earmarked as elephant ranges and tiger ranges, respectively, and send them to loco pilots.

The initiative aims to prevent wildlife from being run over by trains, particularly in elephant and tiger corridors and forested regions. Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Thursday, while sharing this information with the media, said that the cameras, after being fully developed, would be fixed on the top of locomotives.

By October, some concrete development on the installation of such cameras will be ready. In addition to this, the Railways has already laid Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) along railway tracks in several areas that fall within elephant and tiger corridors. This system enables instant alerts from a considerable distance whenever elephants, in particular, are detected moving towards the tracks.

Nearly a year after SC order, retired HC judges still waiting to get ad-hoc benches

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

NEARLY a year after the Supreme Court cleared the decks for appointing ad hoc judges in high courts to tackle pending criminal cases, the Union law ministry is yet to get any recommendation from any of the HC collegiums to appoint retired judges on an ad hoc basis.

According to sources, none of the 25 HCs have recommended names for appointment as ad hoc judges.

On January 30, 2025, the SC allowed the HCs to appoint ad hoc judges, not exceeding 10% of the court's total sanctioned strength, keeping in view the pendency of over 18 lakh criminal cases. However, the law ministry is yet to get recommendations from HC collegiums. Article 224A of the Constitution of India allows the appointment of retired judges as ad hoc judges in state high courts to help manage case backlog.

10% of HC judgeships can go to past justices

On January 30, 2025, the SC allowed the HCs to appoint ad hoc judges, not exceeding 10% of the court's total sanctioned strength, keeping in view the pendency of over 18 lakh criminal cases. Article 224A of the Constitution of India allows the appointment of retired judges as ad hoc judges in state HCs to help manage case backlog.

According to the laid-down procedure, the respective high court collegiums send recommendations or names of candidates to be appointed as HC judges to the Department of Justice in the law ministry. The department then adds inputs and details on the candidates before forwarding them to the Supreme Court Collegium. The SC Collegium then takes a final call and recommends to the government the appointment of the selected persons as judges.

The President signs the 'warrant of appointment' of the newly-appointed judge.

It is to be noted that the procedure to appoint ad hoc judges will be the same except that the President will not sign the warrant of appointment. But the assent of the president will be sought for appointing ad hoc judges. "The ad hoc judges will sit in a bench presided over by a sitting judge of the high court and decide pending criminal appeals," said the Supreme Court's order.

ASSAULTED

Three migrant workers from West Bengal's Paschim Bardhaman district were allegedly assaulted in Maharashtra after being suspected of being 'Bangladeshis' for speaking Bengali.

1 MAN GETS 25-YEAR RI IN UP FOR RAPING MINOR GIRL

INDIA	Max	Min		Max	Min
Ahmedabad	27	15	Mumbai	30	24
Bhopal	21	07	Panaji	32	20
Jaipur	19	08	Patna	15	09
Amritsar	15	06	Lucknow	16	08
Chennai	28	24	Port Blair	29	26
Kolkata	21	13	Imphal	19	08
Srinagar	04	-4	Chandigarh	17	07

NDA clean sweep in Bihar RS polls hinges on Owaisi

Ruling alliance is confident of winning four seats with its 202 MLAs

RAMASHANKAR @ Patna

POLITICAL parties are gearing up for the Rajya Sabha (RS) elections to be held in April to fill up five seats going to be vacant from Bihar. With 202 MLAs, the ruling NDA can comfortably secure four seats in the 243-member assembly, as a candidate will require the support of at least 41 MLAs to secure seat.

For the fifth one, the ruling alliance will need the support of three MLAs from the opposition camp. The INDIA bloc, which has won only 35 seats, is six votes short of the required quota to win even a seat. "Under such a situation five MLAs from Asaduddin Owaisi's AIMIM and one BSP member, who do not belong to either ruling or the opposition camp, will be closely watched in the Rajya Sabha elections," said a political analyst.

The tenure of five RS members -- Prem Chand Gupta and Amarendra Dhari Singh from the RJD, Harivansh and Ram Nath Thakur from JD(U), and Upendra Kushwaha from the RLM -- will expire in April.

Sources said that BJP's national working president Nitin Nabin, presently an MLA, is most probably will be sent to Rajya Sabha. It will be interesting to see whether RLM chief Kushwaha is re-nominated to the Upper House. RLM has four MLAs.The sources said Bhojpuri star Pawan Singh's name is also doing the rounds. He returned to BJP last year but did not contest the election.

From JD (U), both Harivansh and Ram Nath Thakur are likely to be re-nominated to RS. While Harivansh is deputy chairman of Rajya Sabha, Thakur, son of former Bihar CM and socialist icon Karpoori Thakur, is presently a union minister of state. Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) patron Jitan Ram Manjhi has created a flutter in NDA by demanding a Rajya Sabha seat.

Sources said Lok Janshakti Party (RV) chief Chirag Paswan may exert pressure on BJP leadership to spare a Rajya Sabha seat for his party, which won 19 assembly seats in the polls. A party leader said Reena Paswan, mother of Chirag Paswan, is likely to be fielded for Rajya Sabha polls.

Chirag's mother may be picked as candidate

Sources said Lok Janshakti Party (RV) chief Chirag Paswan may exert pressure on BJP leadership to spare a Rajya Sabha seat for his party, which won 19 assembly seats in the polls. A party leader said Reena Paswan, Chirag's mother, is likely to be fielded for Rajya Sabha polls.

Congress acts against 43 rebels for anti-party move during polls

RAMASHANKAR @ Patna

SHOCKED by its defeat in the recently concluded Bihar Assembly election, Congress has taken disciplinary action against 43 of its leaders in the state for indulging in anti-party activities and indiscipline.

Congress won only six out of 61 seats it contested in the last state polls. Most of the leaders facing action are those who had raised a banner of revolt against senior party leaders, including state Congress president Rajesh Ram and AICC incharge of Bihar Krishna Allavaru. They had also alleged that tickets were given in exchange for money.

Party state president Rajesh Ram had constituted a state-level disciplinary committee two days after the Assembly election results were announced on November 14. The committee which was constituted under the chairmanship of senior leader Kapil Dev Prasad Yadav has, so far, expelled seven leaders. In addition, show-cause notices have been issued to 36.

Those expelled include former Bihar Congress vice-presidents Rajkumar Rajan and Shakeelur Rahman, and Banka district party chief Kanchana Singh.

Names of six of the 43 leaders have been forwarded to the All-India Congress Committee (AICC)'s disciplinary action committee for further action.

Ladakh and Kargil citizen groups upset about delays on Sixth Schedule talks

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

DISCONTENT is brewing in Ladakh Union territory, as the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) and Leh Apex Body (LAB), an amalgam of political, social, trade and religious groups, have accused the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) of deliberately delaying dialogue despite submission of a joint report on their demands, including grant of 6th schedule status and statehood.

Addressing a public gathering in Kargil on Sunday, KDA chairman Asgar Karbalai expressed frustration over the Centre's attitude towards Ladakh. "After the first round of talks with MHA following September 24 violence in Leh, MHA had assured us that a meeting would be convened within three days of submitting a written draft on demands. We submitted the joint etailed report in November but since MHA is sitting over it," he said.

Accusing the Centre of testing the patience of Ladakhis, Karbalai alleged that every tactic was being used to weaken the unity of Kargil and Leh. "They want to create a divide between Buddhists and Muslims, between Leh and Kargil. They want us to fight among ourselves so that our genuine and constitutional demands are diluted."

He appealed to Ladakhi people not to fall prey to conspiracies aimed at weakening the LAB and KDA. Karbalai asked the Centre to start meaningful dialogue with Ladakhi people before their patience wears out. "Fulfil the genuine demands of Ladakhi people," he said, demanding immediate release of climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, who is lodged in Jodhpur jail. LAB co-chairman Chering Dorjey said that there had been no communication from MHA since submission of the report. "None from MHA has contacted us so far," he said, adding that attempts were underway to weaken the LAB.

After abrogation of Article 370 and bifurcation of J&K state into two UTs, people in Leh had celebrated the decision while those in Kargil district had opposed the move. Later groups in Leh and Kargil united to safeguard the local identity.

DEHRADUN DIARY

NARENDRA SETHI
Our correspondent in Uttarakhand
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Malta mission to boost citrus economy

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami inaugurated the Uttarakhand Malta Festival at Garhi Cantt, announcing the launch of the 'Malta Mission.' The initiative aims to promote and strengthen Malta production, recognising its cultural significance to the state's identity. Accompanied by his wife, Dhami inspected fruit exhibitions and tasted Malta and lemon-based products. He emphasised that horticulture, following the success of the apple and kiwi missions, is crucial for economic prosperity. Furthermore, the festival will now also be organised in the national capital to further promote the state's citrus produce.

Dhami hosts new Press Club body

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami recently hosted the newly elected executive body of the Uttarakhand Press Club, led by president Ajay Rana, at his residence. The CM underscored the media's vital role in democracy, assuring continuous efforts to resolve journalists' issues. "The state government is constantly striving to solve the problems of media representatives," he said, urging media cooperation for state development. Outgoing president Bhupendra Kandari expressed hope for continued government support. The new team thanked the CM for support regarding the press club building construction.

Rare Sirkeer Malkoha sighted near Uttarkashi

Local environmentalists and forest officials are excited following the first-ever sighting of the Sirkeer Malkoha near Uttarkashi town limits in the Upper Yamuna Forest Division. The Forest Department confirmed capturing images of the rare bird, signaling a positive sign for the local ecosystem. Forest Range Officer, Shekhar Singh Rana, described the bird as olive-brown with a distinctive curved red beak, usually found in lower-altitude scrub forests. Its presence in the Badkot area is considered unusual. Officials have vowed to intensify monitoring and conservation efforts to protect the habitat of this rare avian visitor.

Ex-Waqf Board members in MP face EOW case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bhopal

A criminal case has been registered by the Economic Offence Wing (EOW) following two-month long investigations, which led to detection of irregularities related to Waqf properties that caused financial losses over ₹2.54 crore to the Madhya Pradesh Waqf Board between 2013 and 2018.

The case has been registered against the then Mutawalli (trustee) Shaukat Mohammad, secretary Furqan Ahmad and joint secretary Mohd Zubair Dara, during whose tenure under IPC Sections 409, 420, 120-B and Sections 13(1)(b) and 13(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, official sources in the state's EOW said on Sunday.

The probe revealed that the accused leased out a total of 185 properties of the Waqf Board (total area approximately 83,390 square feet) for tenancy, lease, and construction of houses/shops without following a transparent process and in violation of the terms of the committee's formation order and the provisions of the Waqf Property Lease Rules, 2014 and the amended rules, 2015.

Due to these irregularities, the Waqf Board suffered a total financial loss of ₹2,54,07,119.

Thackerays promise free power, Marathi mayor to Mumbai for BMC polls

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

THE Thackeray brothers—Uddhav and Raj—on Sunday released their joint manifesto, titled 'Promises of Thackeray,' for the January 15 BMC election. They have promised a free water supply and electricity up to 100 units for each household. Covering key sectors, the manifesto details their next five-year plan. Raj Thackeray also said that the next mayor of Mumbai will be a Marathi only.

"Mumbai is the capital of Maharashtra, so its mayor will be Marathi only. We are Hindus, not Hindi. The BJP tries to confuse the two words. But we are clear that the next mayor of Mumbai will be Marathi only," he emphasised.

The land of Mumbai will belong to the Marathi and affordable houses will be constructed for the Marathi people, the manifesto states. The open space and plots will be given to the private developers, where buying houses remains a distant dream to Marathi people. Therefore, the city and its authority body, BMC, will have its own housing authority that will ensure one lakh affordable houses for Mumbaikars in the next five years.

Besides, once the Shiv Sena (UBT) and MNS are in power in BMC, then they will start the ₹1500 per month for registered women domestic workers as a self-respect fund. The registered fishermen and women will get the financial support and new licences, including the facility of transferring licences within the community. The Masaheb Kitchens will be started, which will provide breakfast and lunch for just ₹10 for hard-working Mumbaikars. The brothers also promise to build toilets for women at every two kilometres on major roads in Mumbai.

'Open space, plots for private developers'

They have promised a free water supply and electricity up to 100 units for each household. Covering key sectors, the manifesto details their next five-year plan. The open space and plots will be given to the private developers, where buying houses remains a distant dream to Marathi people.

SIR hearing centres to be set up in Bengal's remote areas

MUKESH RANJAN @ New Delhi

WITH the second phase of the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in West Bengal under way, the Election Commission (EC) has decided to set up 160 special decentralised hearing centres in remote areas of certain districts of the state for residents belonging to marginalised communities.

The 12 districts where such centres would be set up are Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Alipurduar, Jalpaiguri, Jhargram, Purulia, West Midnapore, Bankura, Nadia, West Burdwan, Howrah, and North 24 Parganas. Officials added that the poll panel may consider setting up a couple of such centres in the coastal belts of the South 24 Parganas district as well if the need arises.

A senior official said, "The electoral officers of these districts had sent a recommendation to the commission through the CEO's office for setting up such centres. Considering the legitimacy of the requirement, the commission gave the go-ahead to the proposal."

Since the beginning of the SIR exercise in West Bengal, the EC has been particular about ensuring that voters from marginalised sections are not denied their voting rights because of protocol loops. And hence, they have been given a number of relaxations.

Notably, the EC had announced last week that voters from three "aboriginal tribes" or "primitive tribes" would be automatically enlisted in the final voters' list of West Bengal and that the voters from these three communities would not be required to furnish any documents for that purpose. The tribal communities in question are the Birhors, Totos and Sabars.

The poll body had also announced special relaxations for sex workers, transgenders and members of various other communities in connection with the identity proof-related formalities to be followed at the ongoing hearing sessions.

CEC visits J'khand ahead of revision drive

MUKESH RANJAN @ Ranchi

IN the run-up to SIR in Jharkhand, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar reached Deoghar in Santhal Pargana on Sunday.

After reaching Deoghar, the CEC offered puja at Baba Baidyanath Temple. On Monday morning, he will leave Deoghar for Basukinath Dham in Dumka. Upon a short break, he will return to Deoghar to participate in an event and interact directly with local Booth Level Officers. The visit comes amid allegations by the BJP and other opposition parties that Santhal Pargana's demography has changed drastically due to the influx of Bangladeshi infiltrators into the region.

In its affidavit submitted in Jharkhand HC, the Centre has said that the tribal population in Santhal Pargana has decreased by 16%. It said the Muslim population has increased by 20 to 40% in six districts.

Protesters seek hiring freeze till quota row resolved

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

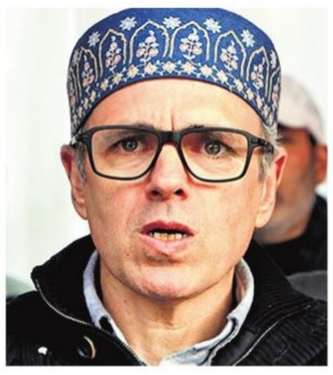
EVEN as the J&K government proceeds with recruitment for vacant posts while awaiting Lt Governor's approval for cabinet proposal to rationalise the existing policy, pressure is mounting to halt recruitments until reservations are revised to ensure fair representation of Open Merit (OM) candidates in the selection process.

The unease stems from recent recruitment advertisements that leave less than 40% posts for aspirants from OM category. Of the 10 Assistant Professor posts advertised at GMC Anantnag and Baramulla, only two have been earmarked for OM quota. Eight are reserved for categories.

Similarly, of the 502 posts of Constable (Telecommunication) advertised by J&K Service Selection Board, only 201 have been left for OM and 301 for different reserved categories.

Of the 480 posts of Medical Officers advertised by J&K Public Service Commission, just 192 posts have been earmarked for OM and rest for the reserved categories. "There are only 2 out of 10 posts for Assistant Professors in open merit. This isn't affirmative action, it's systematic sidelining of merit," said Mir Mujeeb, an OM student representative.

Sahil Parray, a representative advocating for OM aspirants, said reservation was meant to support, not to shrink merit into irrelevance.



KNOTTY ISSUE

1. Recent ads leave less than 40% posts for aspirants from OM category
2. Of 10 Assistant Professor posts advertised at GMC Anantnag and Baramulla, only two are for OM quota
3. The rationalisation of reservation policy has emerged as a key concern

Former Srinagar Mayor Junaid Mattu, while expressing concern on "fast tracking" of recruitment process, said, "By the look of it — there will be nothing left to rationalise by the time the Government comes around to any actual and acceptable action on rationalization of reservations."

"Thousands of posts have been filled up since this Government took over—perpetuating the unjust and unfair reservation policy. Students continue to oscillate from protest to protest without any relief in sight. Recruitments must be halted till reservations are rationalized," Mattu posted on X.

The reservation policy introduced by Lt Governor administration before 2024 Assembly polls raised reservation-category quota to over 60%, reducing OM quota to about 30%.

Currently, SCs have 8% quota, ST 20%, EWS 10%, Residents of Backward Areas (RBA) 10%, Other Backward Classes (OBC) 8%, ALC/IB 4%. Besides, there is 10 % horizontal reservation including 6% to ex-Servicemen and four percent to Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), leaving the Open Merit quota between 30-40%.

J&K Students Association national convenor Nasir Khuehami said the government continues to proceed with large-scale recruitments even though the Cabinet-cleared reservation rationalisation proposal forwarded to Lieutenant Governor remains pending approval.

C'garh tops in parental participation for PM's Pariksha pe Charcha 2026

EJAZ KAISER @ Raipur

CHHATTISGARH has secured the first position in the country on parental participation in 'Pariksha pe Charcha', the flagship initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi intended to make examinations stress-free.

As many as 81,533 parents from Chhattisgarh have registered online for the programme this year on the MyGov portal. So far, 25.16 lakh participants from Chhattisgarh have registered, including 22.75 lakh students, 1,55,000 teachers and 81,533 parents.

A state government spokesperson said, "In terms of parental participation in 'Pariksha Pe Charcha', Chhattisgarh ranks first in the country. In overall registrations, the state stands fourth nationally."

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai said, "The accomplishment is the result of collective efforts of the state's students, teachers and parents. The message given by PM Narendra Modi — that examinations should be celebrated as a festival — has been embraced wholeheartedly in Chhattisgarh. The awareness among parents has increased, and now instead of placing pressure on their children, they are stepping forward to build their confidence."

The spokesperson said maximum participation was ensured through district-level review meetings, youth clubs and the 'Angna Ma Shiksha' programme.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with school students | FILE PIC

15
Death toll reached 15 in violent protests in Iran

GLOBAL WEATHER

Beijing	29	19	SNY	Los Angeles	20	12	SNY
Colombo	29	23	TDS	Melbourne	17	5	LC
Dhaka	27	16	TDS	Moscow	4	2	SNY
Dubai	26	22	SNY	New York	2	-3	SNY
Houston	30	23	TDS	Singapore	27	25	TDS
Istanbul	33	21	SNY	Toronto	-6	-8	SNY
London	12	8	SNY	Washington	3	-2	SNY

LR: Light Rain • HR: Heavy Rain • LS: Light Snow • TDS: Thundershower • LC: Light Cloud • SNY: Sunny

UK calls for 'peaceful transition' of power in Venezuela after US strike

Prime Minister Keith Starmer says Britain has long opposed President Maduro's actions

LONDON

THE UK on Sunday called for a 'safe and peaceful transition' of power in Venezuela after a US operation ordered by President Donald Trump on the South American nation resulted in the capture of President Nicolas Maduro.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Britain has long opposed Maduro's actions and awaited full details of the strikes conducted by the US. He reiterated support for 'international law' but refused to be drawn further on Trump's actions over a "fast-moving" situation.

"The UK has long supported a transition of power in Venezuela. We regarded Maduro as an illegitimate president and we shed no tears about the end of his regime," said Starmer, in a statement issued by 10 Downing Street in London.

"I reiterated my support for international law this morning. The UK government will discuss the evolving situation with US counterparts in the days ahead as we seek a safe and peaceful transition to a legitimate government that reflects the will of the Venezuelan people," he said.

In an interview with the BBC on Saturday night, he said the British government was waiting to 'establish all the facts and speak to allies'.

"I then need to speak to President Trump, I need to speak to our allies, but I don't shy away from this. I've been a lifelong advocate of international law and the importance of compliance with international law.

"But I want to ensure that I've got all the facts at my disposal, and we haven't got that at the moment. And we need to get that before we come to a decision about the consequences in relation to the actions that have been taken," he said, in response to a question about whether international law may have been broken by the US operation. "Our embassy in Caracas is working to ensure all British nationals in Venezuela are supported," he added.

The UK Foreign Office has since advised against all travel to the South American nation and said any British nationals already living in the country should "shelter in place" or "be prepared to change your plans quickly if necessary".

"The UK has consistently rejected Nicolas Maduro's legitimacy, and called for a peaceful transition of power in Venezuela. I have spoken to our Charg' in Caracas, and travel advice has now been updated to advise against all travel to Venezuela," said UK Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper. "Our collective focus must now be on achieving a transition without bloodshed to a democratic government in Venezuela that respects the rights and will of its people," she said. *PTI*

Protesters demonstrate in front of the US Consulate in Amsterdam on Sunday against the US operation in Venezuela to capture Nicolas Maduro | AFP

Mamdani terms US action in Venezuela 'act of war'

New York: New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani has said he spoke with President Donald Trump 'directly' to register his opposition to the capture of Venezuelan President Nicol's Maduro and his wife by the US military, as he termed the attack on a sovereign nation an 'act of war'. 'Unilaterally attacking a sovereign nation is an act of war and a violation of federal and international law,' the mayor said in a statement. 'This blatant pursuit of regime change doesn't just affect those abroad, it directly impacts New Yorkers, including tens of thousands of Venezuelans who call this city home. *PTI*

China asks US to release Maduro, wife 'at once'

BEIJING

CHINA on Sunday called on the United States to release Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and his wife 'at once' and 'resolve issues through dialogue and negotiation.'

:China expresses grave concern over the US forcibly seizing President Nicolas Maduro and his wife and taking them out of the country," a Chinese Foreign Ministry statement here said. The move is in violation of international law, basic norms in international relations, and the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, it said. "China calls on the US to ensure the personal safety of President Nicolas Maduro and his wife, release them at once, stop toppling the government of Venezuela, and resolve issues through dialogue and negotiation," it added.

The ministry earlier on Saturday condemned the US airstrikes on Venezuela and the capture of Maduro and his wife, describing it as a hegemonic act that seriously violates international law.

China is deeply shocked by and strongly condemns the US' blatant use of force against a sovereign state and action against its President, it said, reacting to a question on US President Donald Trump's announcement about American airstrikes against Venezuela and the capture of Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores. *PTI*

JITTERY MINORITY

3 held for murder of Hindu businessman in Bangladesh

DHAKA

THREE persons were arrested on Sunday in the case of hacking and burning to death a Hindu businessman in Shariatpur district of Bangladesh, local media reports said. Khokon Chandra Das, 50, was assaulted near Keurbhanga Bazar in Damudya in Shariatpur district, about 100 kilometres south of Dhaka, on Wednesday night. He died on Saturday.

Prothom Alo newspaper said a team of Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) arrested the three accused on Sunday morning from Kishoreganj, about 100 kilometres northeast of Dhaka.

The arrested were identified as Damudyar Sohag Khan, 27, Rabbi Molya, 21, and Palash Sardar, 25.

RAB Madaripur Camp Company Commander Superintendent of Police Mir Monir Hossain told Prothom Alo that the accused were being brought to Madaripur camp from Kishoreganj.

Madaripur is about 20-odd kilometres away from Shariatpur. Das, who ran a medicine shop and mobile banking business, was travelling in an autorickshaw when the attackers intercepted the vehicle and allegedly beat him up, hacked him with sharp weapons and then poured petrol on his head before setting him on fire, media reports had said on Thursday.

In a bid to save himself, Das jumped into a roadside pond as locals raised an alarm. The attackers fled the scene, police said, adding that he was rescued by locals, taken to Shariatpur Sadar Hospital, and then referred to Dhaka due to the severity of his injuries.

Doctors in Dhaka said Das suffered multiple injuries across his body, including a serious wound to his abdomen, along with burn injuries on his face, head and hands.

Shariatpur Superintendent of Police Rawnak Jahan said the victim had named the accused before his death, news portal BDNews24 said on Sunday.

Das' was the fifth death of a person from Hindu community since December and radical groups in Bangladesh are visibly trying to intimidate the minority faiths, Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council spokesman Kajol Debnath said after his death on Saturday. *PTI*

A Royal Air Force Typhoon aircraft on the tarmac returning at RAF Akrotiri on the island of Cyprus after a joint patrol with French aircraft over Syria | AFP

Drone hit kills 1 near Russian border ahead of peace talks

MOSCOW

ONE person was killed, and two others wounded when a Ukrainian drone struck a car in the Russian border region of Belgorod, local officials said on Sunday, ahead of peace talks to end the nearly 4-year-old war in Paris this week.

Belgorod regional Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov said a young child was among the wounded.

In Ukraine, three people were wounded in the Kharkiv region in drone strikes overnight into Sunday, the country's State Emergency Service said.

Meanwhile, the death toll from a Russian missile attack on the city of Kharkiv on Friday increased to four when two other bodies were found under the rubble of a building, Kharkiv regional head Oleh Syniehubov wrote on Telegram Sunday. The latest attacks came after national security advisers from Europe and other allies visited Kyiv on Saturday to discuss security guarantees and economic support, as a US-led diplomatic push to end the war in Ukraine intensifies.

President Zelenskyy, preparing to travel to Paris for a meeting, said work on the peace proposals could now accelerate as Ukraine has shared all documents under discussion with the 18 national security advisers, including those on security guarantees. *AP*

RACE BEGINS

11 candidates in fray for Portugal president poll

LISBON

A record number of 11 candidates in Portugal's upcoming presidential election kicked off their campaigns on Sunday.

The official two-week campaign period preceding the Jan. 18 election will see the contenders competing to capture voters' support. However, the broad field makes it unlikely that any candidate will capture more than 50 per cent of the vote, leaving the two top candidates to compete in a runoff ballot on Feb. 8.

Among the frontrunners are the candidates from the country's two main parties that have alternated in power for the past 50 years: Lu's Marques Mendes from Social Democratic Party, currently in government, and Antonio Jose Seguro of the centre-left Socialist Party. They are expected to face strong challenges from Andre Ventura, the leader of the populist anti-immigration Chega party, and Henrique Gouveia e Melo, a retired rear admiral running as an independent. *AP*

N Korea launches missiles ahead of South Korean leader's visit to China

SEOUL

NORTH Korea launched multiple ballistic missiles toward its eastern waters Sunday, its neighbours said, just hours before South Korea's president left for China for talks expected to cover North Korea's nuclear program.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement that it detected several ballistic missile launches from North Korea's capital region around 7:50 am It said the missiles flew about 900 kilometres (560 miles) and that South Korea and US authorities were analysing details of the launches.

South Korea's Defence Ministry noted the launches violated UN Security Council resolutions that ban any ballistic activities by North Korea. It urged North Korea to cease provocative actions immediately and respond to South Korea's push to restart talks and restore peace on the Korean Peninsula.

Japanese Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi said that at least two missile launches by North Korea have been confirmed. 'They are a serious problem, threatening the peace and security of our nation, the region and the world,' Koizumi told reporters.

People watch a news broadcast with file footage of a North Korean missile test, at a train station in Seoul on Sunday

The launches were the latest weapons demonstration by North Korea in recent weeks. Experts say North Korea is aiming to show off or review its achievements in the defence sector ahead of its upcoming ruling party congress, the first of its kind in five years.

Observers are watching the Workers' Party congress to see whether North Korea will set a new policy on the US and resume long-stalled talks between the two countries.

North Korea has been focusing on testing activities to enlarge its nuclear arsenal since its leader Kim Jong Un's summit with US President Donald Trump fell apart in 2019. Kim has also boosted his diplomatic credentials by aligning with Russia over its war in Ukraine. Observers say Kim would believe his leverage has sharply increased to wrest concessions from Trump if they sit down for talks again.

North Korea hasn't announced when it will hold the congress, but South Korea's spy service said it will likely occur in January or February.

Sunday's launches came hours before South Korean President Lee Jae Myung departed for China for a summit with President Xi Jinping. During the four-day trip, Lee's office said he would request China, North Korea's major ally and biggest trading partner, to take 'a constructive role' in efforts to promote peace on the Korean Peninsula. South Korea and the US have long asked China to exercise its influence on North Korea to persuade it to return to talks or give up its nuclear program. *AP*

UK bombs Syria ISIS arms bunker in joint strike with France

LONDON

BRITISH and French air force jets have conducted intelligence-led strikes to destroy an arms bunker occupied by the Islamic State (ISIS) terrorist group in Syria, the UK's Ministry of Defence (MoD) said on Sunday.

Royal Air Force (RAF) Typhoon FGR4s, supported by a Voyager refuelling tanker, joined French aircraft in the joint strike on the underground facility on Saturday evening.

According to the MoD, guided bombs were used to target a number of access tunnels down to a bunker linked with ISIS ' officially referred to as Daesh.

'This action shows our UK leadership, and determination to stand shoulder to shoulder with our allies, to stamp out any resurgence of Daesh and their dangerous and violent ideologies in the Middle East,' said John Healey, UK Defence Secretary.

'This operation, to eliminate dangerous terrorists who threaten our way of life, shows how our Armed Forces are ready to step up, all year round, keeping Britain secure at home and strong abroad,' he said.

'I want to thank all the members of our Armed Forces involved in this operation ' for their professionalism and their courage. They were among thousands of British personnel deployed over Christmas and New Year,' he added.

The ministry said that RAF aircraft have continued to conduct patrols over Syria to help prevent any attempted resurgence of the ISIS terrorist movement, following a military defeat at Baghuz Fawqani in March 2019. 'Intelligence analysis identified an underground facility, in the mountains some miles north of the ancient site of Palmyra. This had been occupied by Daesh, to store weapons and explosives. The area around the facility is devoid of any civilian habitation,' the MoD said.

'Our aircraft used Paveway IV guided bombs to target a number of access tunnels down to the facility; initial indications are that the target was engaged successfully. There is no indication of any risk having been posed to civilians by the strike, and all our aircraft returned safely,' it added. *PTI*

EXPRESS READ

25 dead as boat capsizes in Nigeria

Yobe: A passenger boat has capsized in northern Nigeria's Yobe state, leaving at least 25 people dead while 14 others remained missing, emergency services said on Sunday. The boat was carrying residents who had gone to the local market, while some were involved in fishing or farming, when it capsized along the Yobe River in Yobe state's Garbi town on Saturday night, according to the Yobe emergency management agency. Emergency services said Sunday. Out of the 52 passengers on board the boat, 13 were rescued.

Search for missing soccer coach extended

Jakarta: Indonesian rescuers recovered a second body Sunday in the ongoing search for a Spanish soccer coach and two of his children who went missing after a tour boat sank during their Christmas holiday. The rescue team retrieved the body floating near Padar island, about 2km from the site of the sinking, said Fathur Rahman, the Maumere Search and Rescue Office chief. The body remains unidentified by authorities, but is believed to be that of a member of the family who was on a holiday in Komodo National Park area.

IN DEEP MOURNING

Mother says goodbye to son as Swiss community grieves after deadly fire

CRANS-MONTANA

A mass was held Sunday for victims of the New Year's Eve fire at a bar in the Swiss Alpine resort of Crans-Montana, which left 40 dead and many severely injured, as distressed parents waited for news of their children or began the long process of mourning.

Grey-haired parents, teenagers and members of the police were seen comforting one another during the service, which took place at the Chapelle St-Christophe in Crans-Montana. Mass was set to be followed by a silent march to the site of the tragedy.

In the crowded pews, a grieving woman listened intently, her hands clasped tightly and sometimes clasping rosary beads, as speakers delivered readings in German, French and Italian. Despite freezing weather, several hundred followed the Mass on the screen installed outside the church.

The Rev. Gilles Cavin spoke of the 'terrible uncertainty' for families unsure if their loved ones are among the dead or still alive among the injured. 'We pray for their friends hard hit by misery on this day that was meant to be one of festivities and friendship,' he said.

Forty people died, and 119 were injured in the blaze that broke out around 1:30 am on Thursday at Le Constellation bar. Police have said many of the victims were in their teens to mid-20s. By Sunday morning, Swiss authorities identified 24 out of the 40 fatalities. They include 18 Swiss citizens aged 14 to 31 years, two Italians, 16 years old, one dual citizen of Italy and the United Arab Emirates, also 16 years old, an 18-year-old Romanian, a 39-year-old French and a Turkish citizen, 18.

A makeshift memorial near the Constellation bar in honour of the victims of the fire that ripped through the venue in the luxury Alpine ski resort on New Year's Eve | AFP

One of the victims was 16-year-old Arthur Brodard, whose mother had been frantically searching for him.

'Our Arthur has now left to party in paradise,' a visibly shaken Laetitia Brodard said in a Facebook story posted on Saturday night, speaking to the camera. 'We can start our mourning, knowing that he is at peace and in the light.'

Brodard's frenzied search for her son reflected the desperation of families of the young people who had disappeared during the fire, who did not know whether their loved ones were dead or in the hospital.

Swiss authorities said the process of identifying victims was particularly hard because of the advanced degree of the burns, requiring the use of DNA samples. Brodard also had given her DNA sample to help in the identification process.

In her Facebook post, Brodard thanked those who 'testified their compassion, their love, and to those who shared information as she anxiously searched and waited for news of her son. Other parents and siblings are still waiting in anguish.

Swiss authorities have opened a criminal investigation into the bar managers.

The two are suspected of involuntary homicide, involuntary bodily harm, and involuntarily causing a fire, the Valais region's chief prosecutor, Beatrice Pilloud, told reporters Saturday. The announcement of the investigation did not name the managers.

Investigators said they believe sparkling candles atop Champagne bottles ignited the fire when they came too close to the ceiling of the crowded bar.

Authorities planned to look into whether sound-dampening material on the ceiling conformed with regulations and whether the candles were permitted for use in the bar. *AP*

₹7,608 CR foreign portfolio investors withdrew from Indian equities in the first two trading sessions of January

Labour codes: Changes in pay, retiral benefits

While take-home salary might slightly go down, PF and gratuity will go up, resulting in higher retirement corpus

PUSHPITA DEY @ Chennai

THE Ministry of Labour has pre-published draft rules under the new labour codes and invited public comments. Once the codes are implemented, they are expected to alter salary structures, take-home pay, gratuity and the taxable components for salaried employees. While monthly take-home pay may marginally decline, provident fund (PF) contributions and gratuity payouts are likely to rise, leading to a higher retirement corpus over time.

FAQs released by the Ministry of Labour and Employment on December 30, 2025, clarified that if payments or allowances—other than basic pay, dearness allowance (DA) and retaining allowance—exceed 50% (or such percentage as may be notified) of total remuneration, the excess amount will be added to "wages".

Therefore, as long as allowances other than basic pay, DA and retaining allowance remain within 50% of total remuneration, no additional amount will be included in "wages" for the purpose of retirement contributions and benefits.

"Companies may need to relook at their salary structures, as some allowances may fall outside the excluded allowances under the definition of wages. This could result in higher gratuity provisions, which will need to be accounted for in the current year's financials," said Anshul Jain, National Leader – Regulatory, PwC India.

Currently, many companies calculate PF contributions only on basic pay, while some include DA, where applicable—typically a small portion of total compensation. Under the new codes, any allowance exceeding 50% of pay will be treated as wages, thereby expanding PF contribution base.

Companies may need to relook at their salary structures, as some allowances may fall outside the excluded allowances under the definition of wages

Anshul Jain, PwC India

This will increase both employer contributions and employee deductions, reducing monthly take-home pay but strengthening long-term retirement savings.

"With the Codes introducing a harmonised and more expansive definition of wages, the PF contribution base becomes broader (subject to statutory thresholds). As a result, fixed-term employees stand to accumulate higher retirement savings over the course of their engagement," said Pooja Ramchandani, Partner, Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co.

Experts noted that if the basic salary is increased to 45–50% of cost-to-company (CTC), house rent allowance (HRA)—which is calculated as a percentage of basic pay—would also rise. However, a higher basic pay component could have tax implications, particularly for employees opting for the old tax regime.

"Under the old tax regime, an increase in basic salary and, consequently, HRA allows employees to claim a higher HRA exemption, subject to conditions such as rent payment and documentation," said Tarun Garg, Director–Tax, Deloitte Haskins & Sells LLP.

He added that employees' PF contributions qualify for deduction under Section 80C of the Income-tax Act, 1961 (or Section 123 of I-T Act, 2025). With higher PF contributions—if employees want to contribute on the revised 'wages'—they can avail higher tax deductions, subject to the overall limit of ₹1.5 lakh.

IN CONVERSATION

MANISH GUPTA
Chairman, Insolation Energy

'Govt should increase PLI support to solar sector in Budget 2026'

AS India is aiming to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2070, a commitment made at the COP26 summit, usage of solar energy is gaining momentum. The government has introduced policies like PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana to give boost to the sector. **Manish Gupta**, chairman, Insolation Energy Ltd (INA Solar), the country's leading solar panel manufacturing company, talks to **Pushpita Dey** about how adoption of solar can further be enhanced and what more the industry expects from the government. Edited. **Excerpts**:

INA Solar has emerged as a strong domestic player in modules and panels. What is your road map to compete with global giants? Any plans for global expansion?
We have three units of solar panel manufacturing. Total cumulative capacity is about 1.53 gigawatt and we are also expanding to solar manufacturing up to 7 gigawatt and our unit 4 and unit 5 construction has already started in full swing in MP where we are coming up with 4.5 gigawatt solar cell and 18,000 tonne annual capacity of aluminium frame. We are also coming up with 500 megawatt of the Kusum Component in Rajasthan.

In the next two years, we are planning to deploy over ₹3,000 crore rupee for solar component manufacturing, especially panel, cell and aluminium frame for Kusum projects. We are optimistic for the future energy market and we are aligned with honourable Prime Minister's dream to make in India for solar component manufacturing from polysilicon to solar panel.

We don't face any problem with raw material import. Majority of raw materials are imported from China, Malaysia or Vietnam. There is no challenge, we pay duty and we import material, there is no problem

What is the import dependence for solar cell manufacturing in India, particularly on China ?
Solar manufacturing requires more than 13 types of raw materials. Earlier, India was heavily dependent on imports for key inputs such as solar cells, glass, aluminium and other components needed to manufacture panels. However, domestic capacity for solar cell manufacturing has expanded significantly and continues to grow. Over the next two-three years, India is likely to achieve self-reliance in solar cells, as well as in glass, aluminium and other key inputs. The two remaining critical challenges are wafers and polysilicon where dependence on China remains high. With the government prioritising complete manufacturing chain, India is likely to achieve end-to-end self-sufficiency within the next four-five years.

Did you face any import challenges?
We don't face any problem with raw material import. Our majority of raw materials are imported either from China, Malaysia or Vietnam. For these countries, there is no challenge, we pay that duty and we import material there is no problem.

With Budget around the corner, what do you expect from the government?
The key expectation is an increase in PLI support, particularly for upstream segments such as wafers and polysilicon. Government could announce a separate, dedicated PLI scheme for this segment to strengthen domestic value chains. In addition, PM Surya Ghar 2 and KUSUM Yojana 2 should be rolled out, alongside faster approvals and execution of transmission infrastructure. The government must guarantee 100% power evacuation. Any delay in transmission lines could jeopardise over ₹3 lakh crore already invested in solar manufacturing.

Do you think there will be an impact of United States' retreat from sustainable finance under President Donald Trump? Will it become difficult to gee green financing particularly for small players?
There is effectively no alternative for financial institutions but to fund the green energy sector. What was earlier seen as a policy requirement has now become an economic and developmental necessity.

MONEY-WISE

CREATING WEALTH VIA VARIOUS ASSETS

FINANCIAL ADVICE

PV SUBRAMANYAM
writes at www.subramoney.com and has authored the best seller 'Retire Rich - Invest ₹40 a day'

WEALTH creation involves strategic investments in equities and diversified assets, leveraging the country's robust economic growth projected for 2026. With GDP expected to expand amid corporate earnings revival, disciplined investing can yield substantial returns over time. Key is starting early, understanding risks, and maintaining a long-term perspective.

Equities: The core of wealth building - Equities remain premier long-term wealth creator.

For beginners, adopt a passive strategy: Allocate 70% of capital to low-cost Nifty 50 Index Funds to capture market upside with minimal fees. Focus on quality stocks in sectors like data centers, renewables, fintech, and AI-driven industries, which are poised for exponential growth by 2030.

Systematic investment plans (SIPs) in equity MFs mitigate volatility by averaging costs. Aim for 12-15% annual returns, but brace for short-term corrections due to global uncertainties. Use demat accounts' seaamless trading facility, and stay compliant with SEBI regulations. Diversify with other assets to balance risk, incorporate non-equity assets. Debt instruments like government bonds or corporate fixed deposits provide stability, with yields around 7-8% in 2026 amid potential rate cuts. Gold, as a hedge against inflation, can form 10-15% of your portfolio; invest via Sovereign Gold Bonds or ETFs for liquidity. Realty offers tangible growth via REITs or direct property in urban areas, yielding rental income plus appreciation, though liquidity is lower.

Alternatives like PPF or EPF ensure tax-efficient, risk-free savings with 7-8% returns. Experts recommend a mix: 50-60% equities, 20-30% debt, 10% gold, and 10% real estate for optimal diversification.

Strategies and risk management - Build a balanced portfolio tailored to your risk appetite and goals—use tools like asset allocation calculators. While re-allocating assets remember that a written down plan is easier to execute.

Monitor tax implications: Long-term capital gains on equities over ₹1.25 lakh are taxed at 12.5%, while debt follows slab rates. Avoid emotional trading or over-leveraging. Rebalance annually to maintain ratios.In 2026, shift from idle cash to active investing amid equity revival and stable debt markets.

Think of multi-asset funds and balance advantage funds to optimise tax. Your CA who files your tax returns may not be the best person for investment advice, but your financial adviser may not understand tax. You have to understand clubbing, minor taxation, balanced funds, etc. to appreciate what I am saying.

Patience and consistency are key—compounding turns modest investments into wealth. Start small, educate yourself via resources like NSE India, and aim for financial independence through informed choices.

Remember that if you (or your father!) had invested Rs. 100 in 1979 in the Sensex, it would be worth more than Rs. 117,000!! Assuming that it was in a Growth option and had no withdrawals.

MONEY MATTERS

DIVERSIFICATION OF RISK CAN'T BE COMPROMISED

FINANCIAL KNOWLEDGE

RAJAS KELKAR
(The author is editor-in-chief at www.moneyminute.in)

GOLD had an unprecedented run over the past decade. It has outperformed all other asset classes and has skewed every theory of market risk diversification. Indian households, with an estimated holding of over 34,000 tonne of gold, are probably the best fund managers in the world. Over the past 20 years, gold has rallied 10 times in value, while the BSE Sensex has risen 9 times, outperforming every other asset class. Over the past 30 years, gold and Sensex have mirrored returns.

It is natural that you may want to question the success of other asset classes and believe that gold is the bulwark of your financial future.

The challenge for financial services is that gold is uncomplicated, while the financial products are not. It is easy to understand, and people value its liquidity and ease of use. For most of the people in India, physical assets like real estate and gold are preferred asset classes. There is still a sense of comfort in holding assets that offer tangible benefits. That is despite financial products like equity assets offering similar long-term performance. It is also very easy to own equity assets due to the digital revolution, which has boosted financial inclusion in India. Yet, less than 10% of people benefit from the growth in the BSE Sensex. In comparison, gold finds its way into every household. As a result, Indian households holding gold in jewellery or other forms are wealthier than ever before.

Your financial future depends on your investment generating a return that is significantly higher than the prevailing inflation rate. The thumb rule is to ensure twice or thrice the inflation rate. In 2026, there is likely to be significant interplay. India's economy is likely to continue to remain the fastest-growing large economy, according to most experts' views. Many analysts expect listed companies that form a part of major benchmark indices to show strong profit growth. The Reserve Bank of India predicts a benign inflation outlook, and there are signs that borrowing rates will trend downwards. That gives a tailwind to the stock market. Domestic mutual funds continue to see robust net monthly flows and are providing solid support. Foreign portfolio investors have been net sellers in 2025. However, they continue to hold a sizeable stake in Indian equities at over $850bn. They are merely booking profits and would return once profits show a sustainable growth path.

Despite everything falling in place for a sustained equity rally, risk perception is high in financial markets.

The recent US attack on Venezuela and capture of the president could further complicate the geopolitical situation. The world is likely to continue to face risks, and trade relations will suffer in 2026. That is likely to push the risk meter in financial markets higher and give a further tailwind to gold prices, which are already at a record high.

While equity markets carry a higher risk than a precious metal like gold, it is a fact that gold prices barely moved for years after suddenly rallying. Just as the share prices of quality companies do not fall significantly even in a downturn, gold prices rarely crash because new money keeps flowing in.

The current buying of gold is mainly due to major central banks. Financial institutions have increased their gold allocations amid an unprecedented rally in stock markets. Surging gold prices are usually a fear factor. Surging equity or bond prices are an indicator of substantial future profits and economic growth. Sophisticated investors maintain a diverse pool of assets to preserve wealth. That applies to you, too. Diversification of risk is essential and cannot be compromised just because a particular asset class is having an unprecedented run.

MANDAR PARDIKAR

Venezuela crisis may unlock ONGC dues

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

THE US-led restructuring of Venezuela government may pave the way for India's oil sector to unlock close to $1 billion in long-pending dues in the Latin American country.

According to a report citing sources, the US presence in Venezuela may accelerate the revival of crude production from oilfields operated by foreign firms in the sanctions-hit country.

ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL), India's overseas oil arm, jointly operates San Cristobal oilfield in eastern Venezuela. Production there has dropped sharply because US sanctions blocked access to key technology, equipment and services, leaving large oil reserves untapped.

Venezuela has not paid OVL $536 million in dividends on its 40% stake in the field up to 2014.

Venezuela liable to pay ONGC Videsh $1 billion

Venezuela has not paid ONGC Videsh Ltd $536 million in dividends on its 40% stake in the field up to 2014. A similar amount is due for later years, but the government has not allowed audits, freezing the settlement process.

A similar amount is due for later years, but the government has not allowed audits, freezing the settlement process.

India was once a major buyer of Venezuelan heavy crude, importing over 400,000 barrels per day at its peak. Purchases stopped in 2020 after US sanctions made trade difficult.

Analysts said sanctions could be eased after a US operation removed President Nicolas Maduro and placed Venezuela's oil sector under American oversight.

If sanctions are lifted, OVL could move drilling rigs and equipment from ONGC's fields in Gujarat to San Cristobal to boost production, which has fallen to just 5,000–10,000 barrels a day, officials said. Once exports resume, OVL could recover its nearly USD 1 billion in dues from future oil revenues. The company had earlier sought a special US licence, similar to the one given to Chevron, to operate and export oil.

Indian companies could also expand their presence in Venezuela. OVL holds an 11 per cent stake in the Carabobo-1 heavy oil block, while Indian Oil Corporation and Oil India Ltd each own 3.5 per cent. Venezuela's state oil firm PdVSA is the majority owner in both projects.

CIEL HR Services raises ₹30 cr from 88 investors including Zoho, Pegasus

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Chennai

CHENNAI-based CIEL HR Services Ltd, the country's leading staffing solutions provider, said it has raised ₹30 crore from 88 investors, including Zoho Corporation, Pegasus India and Standard Fireworks, as part of its pre-IPO (initial public offer) placement.

The company said it has undertaken a pre-IPO placement of 27,27,272 equity shares for ₹110 apiece. It also said that the size of the IPO, which was initially planned of ₹3,280.78 million, has been reduced by ₹300 million and the offer for sale remains at 47,39,336 equity shares.

Besides Zoho, Pegasus and Standard Fireworks, other pre-IPO placement investors are Rajashekar Reddy Seelam,

founder of 24 Mantra Organic brand; broking company Prime Securities; Sri Kaliswari Fireworks; KVPS Investments, family office of the Pothys; AIKYAM Capital; NS Rajan; former CHRO of Tata Sons; and former chief learning officer at WIPRO Abhijit Bhaduri.

The pre-IPO placement was approved by the Board on November 17, 2025, and later by shareholders at their extra ordinary general meeting held on November 28, 2025.

The company plans to utilise the proceeds from the fresh issue to acquire additional stakes in its subsidiaries — Firstventure Corporation, Integrum Technologies, Next Leap Career Solutions, People Metrics and Thomas Assessments — besides funding incremental working capital requirements, pursuing inorganic acquisitions and meeting general corporate expenses.

It will also invest in five subsidiaries — CCIEL Skills and Careers, First Venture Corporation, Integrum Technologies, Ma Foi Strategic Consultants and Next Leap Career Solutions — to expand their learning experience platforms.

Delays mar opening day of elite boxing nationals

The country's boxers were left anxiously waiting for hours as chaos marred Day 1 of the boxing national championships, which was delayed by more than four hours due to 'logistical' issues at Greater Noida on Sunday. The tournament was scheduled to begin at 2pm at the Gautam Buddh University. Instead, due to confusion, bouts finally begun at 6.30 pm.

BCB decision a headache for ICC and BCCI

THE Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on Sunday decided against sending its national team to India for the T20 World Cup next month citing security concerns and government advice. Indian Premier League franchise Kolkata Knight Riders' decision to release pacer Mustafizur Rahman on BCCI's instruction led the BCB to hold an emergency meeting. Following the meeting, its board of directors decided the team will not travel to India for the tournament starting February 7. The Bangladesh team is scheduled to play the second match on the opening day in Kolkata. With the ICC yet to come out with its official response on the BCB's request, only three scenarios look possible (see boxes).

What BCB said

Following a thorough assessment of the prevailing situation and the growing concerns regarding the safety and security of the Bangladesh contingent in India and considering the advice from the Bangladesh Government, the board of directors resolved that the Bangladesh national team will not travel to India for the tournament under the current conditions. In light of this decision, the BCB has formally requested the International Cricket Council (ICC), as the event authority, to consider relocating all of Bangladesh's matches to a venue outside India. — Bangladesh Cricket Board in a statement

1 THE foremost concern would be finding a venue for Bangladesh. Pakistan are staying put in Colombo for the group stage as they play all their four matches at the two venues in the city which means the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium could become Bangladesh's home for the group stage. If that happens, they can play their first three matches at the venue but have to shift to R Premadasa International Cricket Stadium for their match against Nepal as Kandy will be hosting Ireland vs Zimbabwe game on the same day.

2 THE current fixtures mean all Group C teams are travelling to either Mumbai or Kolkata but that will change completely. All these teams have to travel to either Colombo or Kandy for their matches against Bangladesh. Apart from travel issues, it will also create a big headache for broadcasters.

3 THERE is enough gap between two matches for each team, making the travel less hectic but their preparations ahead of the tournament can go for a toss if the venues are changed entirely.

4 SUPER Eights and knockouts will also get affected to a great extent and India will miss out on chance to host the last two games (semifinals and final) if both Pakistan and Bangladesh reach the last two stages and feature in different semifinals. As per the existing arrangement, the first semifinal is scheduled in Kolkata/Colombo (Premadasa) while the final is scheduled in Ahmedabad/Colombo (Premadasa) keeping Pakistan in view. Needless to say, that will change if Bangladesh make it to second semifinal assuming Pakistan enter the first.

A logistical nightmare

Bangladesh are placed in Group C along with England, West Indies, Italy and Nepal. All these teams play their matches in Kolkata and Mumbai only. If Bangladesh Cricket Board's demand of shifting its team's matches outside India is accepted then it would necessitate a complete overhaul of the fixtures announced by the ICC. Here's why..

SCENARIO 1: If the ICC accepts, whole fixtures have to be rejigged, which looks almost impossible with a little more than a month to go for the tournament. It will also bring the Sri Lanka Cricket, the co-hosts of the tournament, into the picture as it has to find a suitable base for Bangladesh like Pakistan. This will also lead to change in travel plans of almost all the teams and could affect the venues for the two semifinals and final.

SCENARIO 2: The ICC convinces the BCB to play in India. Pakistan played their 2023 ODI World Cup matches in India and Hyderabad became their base. With Chennai only the host city this time, the BCCI can look for a suitable option in South India.

SCENARIO 3: The ICC doesn't accept the request which in turn forces it to withdraw from the event. It looks unlikely but if happens then it could attract heavy sanctions on the BCB including ban on their participation in the upcoming tournament.

Schedule of Group C

BANGLADESH (Mumbai/Kolkata)
Feb 7: vs West Indies at Kolkata (3PM)
Feb 9: vs Italy at Kolkata (11AM)
Feb 14: vs England at Kolkata (3PM)
Feb 17: vs Nepal at Mumbai (7PM)

ENGLAND (Mumbai/Kolkata)
Feb 8: vs Nepal at Mumbai (3PM)
Feb 11: vs West Indies at Mumbai (7PM)
Feb 14: vs Bangladesh at Kolkata (3PM)
Feb 16: vs Italy at Kolkata (3PM)

WEST INDIES (Mumbai/Kolkata)
Feb 7: vs Bangladesh at Kolkata (3PM)
Feb 11: vs England at Mumbai (7PM)
Feb 15: vs Nepal at Mumbai (11AM)
Feb 19: vs Italy at Kolkata (11AM)

ITALY (Mumbai/Kolkata)
Feb 9: vs Bangladesh at Kolkata (11AM)
Feb 12: vs Nepal at Mumbai (3PM)
Feb 16: vs England at Kolkata (3PM)
Feb 19: vs West Indies at Kolkata (11AM)

NEPAL (Mumbai)
Feb 8: vs England at Mumbai (3PM)
Feb 12: vs Italy at Mumbai (3PM)
Feb 15: vs West Indies at Mumbai (11AM)
Feb 17: vs Bangladesh at Mumbai (7PM)

Joe Root (L) and Harry Brook scored half-centuries on Sunday | AFP

Root, Brook dominate Aus on rain-hit Day 1

AGENCIES @ Sydney

JOE Root and Harry Brook tamed Australia's all-pace attack with an unbroken 154-run stand on Sunday to rescue England and give them the upper hand after a rain-hit day one of the fifth and final Ashes Test.

Batting after skipper Ben Stokes won the toss at a sold-out Sydney Cricket Ground, they steered the tourists to 211/3 when bad light forced the players from the field just before tea. Subsequent rain and the risk of lightning made no further play possible, with stumps called an hour early.

Root was not out 72 and Brook on 78 after coming together with England tottering at 57-3 following the wickets of Ben Duckett (27), Zak Crawley (16) and Jacob Bethell (10) before lunch.

BRIEF SCORES: England 211/3 in 45 ovs (Brook 78 n.o, Root 72 n.o, Duckett 27; Neser 1/36) vs Australia.

Both brought up hard-fought half-centuries and, with dark storm clouds looming, kept the scoreboard ticking over at a fast clip. "Hopefully we can make the most of that going into tomorrow. "It was good pitch," he added. "When I first went in it felt like the bounce was fairly steep. But then it it started to get a little bit lower and slower and just generally feels like a good wicket."

England came into the game buoyed by a four-wicket win inside two days in the previous Test in Melbourne, desperate to keep the momentum going.

Raza & Royals pile more misery on holders MI in SA20

GOMESH S @ Cape Town

WHEN MI Cape Town took the field at Newlands on Sunday afternoon, they felt the heat. Not just the baking summer Sun beating down on them, but also on the field. Coming into the contest, the defending champions were lingering at the bottom of the table with just two points and zero wins.

They had lost to Durban Super Giants in the opening game, got hammered by Pretoria Capitals before losing by one run to Paarl Royals in a thriller. Add to the fact that the two matches on Saturday were washed out, Sunday was a perfect chance for MI to come out from under and hit the ground running in front of a passionate, packed home crowd.

However, little did they know what was in store. Led by a lanky, yet fierce, 19-year-old Nqobani Mokoena (2/10) and Sikandar Raza (4/13), Royals rattled MI, fizzling them out for 88 runs in 18.4 overs. In response, the Royals stuttered a little but eventually got across the line with seven wickets in hand.

As much as it was a disappointing story for MI, the contest was all about a teenager and a veteran owning their stage in SA20. Raza, the first Zimbabwe player to feature in the tournament, did not take time to make an impact. Having already stepped up in the previous game against the same opponent with a three-fer at Paarl only two days ago, Raza once again was at the front and centre of it all in Cape Town.

Off-spinner Sikandar Raza celebrates a wicket on Sunday | SA20

The spin-bowling all-rounder was welcomed by Rassie van der Dussen with a boundary, but Raza bounced back with a short ball which caught the South African in an awkward position. He miscued the pull, and that was just the beginning. Jason Smith played one on to the stumps, George Linde chipped it back to Raza before MI captain Rashid Khan tried to take him in a desperate attempt on the very first ball, only to find the fielder.

If Raza finished with a magical 4/13, Mokoena showed why he is one of the most exciting fast-bowling prospects in the country. The 19-year-old pacer from Northwood School in Durban played just seven T20s before making his SA20 debut this season.

Having already taken four wickets against Sunrisers Eastern Cape at Gqeberha a few days ago, Mokoena was letting it rip in front of the MI home crowd. With the extra bounce he generated, Ryan Rickleton was caught by surprise as he mistimed the pacer to mid-off. Every time he ran in, Mokoena created anticipation — one of the few things that kept the fans on their toes amidst a forgettable show from MI batters — and he set it up for Ottneil Baartman at the other end as well. After losing the early momentum, MI never really recovered.

Now, at the bottom of the table, the defending champions will face Joburg Super Kings at the same venue on Tuesday. Paarl Royals will also face Joburg on Thursday, January 8 at Wanderers.

Brief scores: MI Cape Town 88 in 18.4 ovs (R Hendricks 18; S Raza 4/14, N Mokoena 2/10) **lost to** Paarl Royals 90/3 in 13 ovs (A Tribe 34, C Bosch 1/9).

New SG Pipers coach Oudenaller aims for revival

CHANDRA PRABHU @ Chennai

THE main priority for new SG Pipers coach from Netherlands, Tim Oudenaller, is to integrate the thirteen Indian players with the seven foreigners. Pipers, who had a wooden-spoon finish in last year's Hockey India League (HIL), now have fresh faces, both on the court and in the coaching staff, and they'll be hoping for a turnaround in fortunes.

The Pipers begin this season's campaign on Monday with a match against HIL Governing Council Team — a team that replaced the UP Rudras — at the Mayor Radhakrishnan Stadium here.

Tim Oudenaller

Oudenaller was last seen on the sidelines here, when he was assistant coach of the U21 Netherlands team during the Junior World Cup last month. Known for prioritising a strong defensive structure, Oudenaller guided the renowned Dutch Hockey club SV Kampong to the national league title in 2023-24, and also reached the Euro Hockey League final that season.

"I think we have all the ingredients for having a better season this year," he said in a virtual media interaction on Sunday.

Last year, the Pipers had a season to forget, scoring 18 goals and conceding as many as 30 goals. After the mini-auction in September 2025, the Pipers added Jacob Draper of Wales, who was traded from Ranchi Royals and young Belgian forward Roman Duvekot.

Veteran Rupinder Pal Singh is also another new signing for the team. The defensive spine, led by newly-appointed captain Jarmanpreet Singh, will have drag flicker Varun Kumar, who has 39 goals in 142 international matches.

One of the key areas that Oudenaller said that they are working on is penalty corners. The likes of Rupinder, Varun and Welshman Gareth Furlong are some notable drag flickers.

"We are working hard on both penalty corner conversions and penalty corner defence. Those are the most important things. (With conversions) we are trying to give the guys confidence, because if they can flick, they have a really good ball. With defence, we now have a really good Argentinian goalie, Thomas Santiago, and he is working on the defence as well. So it looks sorted," he added.

Goalscoring was one of their concerns last season. Tomas Domene of Argentina and Welshman Furlong were the main goalscorers then.

Oudenaller is confident that the talented players in the team can step up.

"We have a young Belgian striker in Duvekot, who is a little bit unknown. We have Aditya Lalage, who has stepped up to the senior Indian men's team and Dilraj Singh, who had a good Junior World Cup, scoring eight goals. So, compared to last year, I think all the guys are more experienced. They know they have to combine to score with four or five guys. I feel good about that," he said.

Watch SG Pipers vs HIL GC on Sony Sports Network and DD Sports from 7.30 pm.

Shrachi Bengal Tigers players celebrate a goal on Sunday | ASHWIN PRASATH

HIL: Holders Bengal begin season with big win

Defending champions Shrachi Bengal Tigers opened their campaign with a 3–1 victory over JSW Soorma HC, while Vedanata Kalinga Lancers rallied to beat Ranchi Royals in their opening clash here on Sunday.

Hosts Morocco book AFCON quarters berth

AGENCIES @ Rabat

BRAHIM DIAZ'S second-half strike was enough as hosts Morocco beat Tanzania to book a spot in the Africa Cup of Nationals quarterfinals, on Sunday.

Tanzania, appearing in the knockout phase of an AFCON for the first time, offered stubborn resistance until Diaz broke the deadlock in the 64th minute of the Round of 16 contest. Morocco are seeking first AFCON title in half a century.

On Saturday, Pape Gueye scored twice as much-fancied Senegal came from behind to beat Sudan 3-1 and seal a place in the quarterfinals while 10-man Mali edged Tunisia in a dramatic penalty shoot-out.

An upset was on the cards when Aamir Abdallah, a semi-professional who plays for an Australian second-tier club in Melbourne, curled in a superb early opener for Sudan.

Morocco's Brahim Diaz reacts after scoring against Tanzania | AFP

Nevertheless Senegal came back to lead by half-time thanks to a brace by Villarreal's Pape Gueye. Later, teenager Ibrahim Mbaye sealed the win.

Liverpool & Man United held in EPL

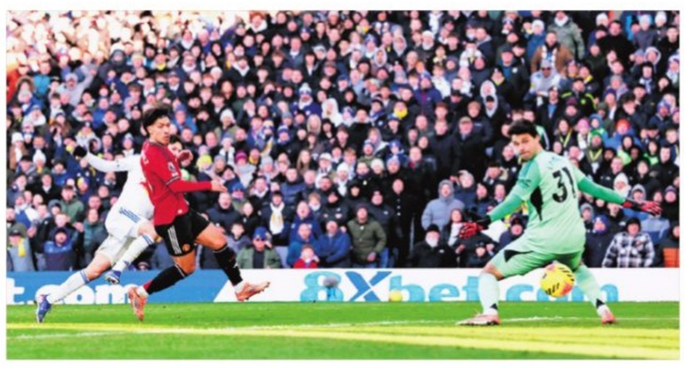
AGENCIES @ London

HARRISON Reed struck a stunning equaliser for Fulham to salvage a 2-2 draw against Liverpool as both sides scored in stoppage time, while Manchester United were held 1-1 at Leeds on Sunday.

Liverpool looked set to consolidate their place in the Premier League's top four when they came from behind to lead at Craven Cottage. Harry Wilson opened the scoring against his former club to give Fulham a deserved half-time lead.

Florian Wirtz levelled before Cody Gakpo steered home Jeremie Frimpong's cross in the 94th minute.

However, the visitors' celebrations were cut short when Reed took aim from outside the box and blasted into the top corner for his first goal in three years. A point keeps Liverpool three points ahead of fifth-placed United in the battle for a place in next season's Champions League.



Leeds' Brendon Aaronsen (extreme L) scores against Man United on Sunday | AFP

Brenden Aaronson put Leeds in front, but Matheus Cunha quickly levelled to ensure United did not fall to a first defeat against Leeds in 16 years.

Barcelona, Real Madrid win

BARCELONA: Barcelona snatched a 2-0 win at Espanyol in La Liga late on Saturday. Real Madrid also posted an emphatic 5-1 win over Real Betis, cutting down Barca's lead to four points in the process.

Sunday's results: Everton **2-4** Brentford; Fulham **2-2** Liverpool; Leeds **1-1** Man United; Newcastle **2-0** Palace; Tottenham **1-1** Sunderland; **La Liga:** Espanyol **0-2** Barcelona; Real Madrid **5-1** Real Betis.

EXPRESS READ

WTT Youth Contender: Good starts for Syndrela, Divyanshi

VADODARA: Reigning champion Syndrela Das and top seed Divyanshi Bhowmick began their girls U-19 singles campaign with impressive wins in the group stage in the WTT Youth Contender on Sunday. Syndrela defeated Archismita Mahato 11-7, 11-7, 11-8 while Divyanshi defeated Shrestha K 11-4, 11-3, 11-7.

Bengaluru Open: Nagal to take on Prajwal in opening round

BENGALURU: Following Sunday's main draw ceremony for the Bengaluru Open at the SM Krishna Tennis Stadium, India No 1 Sumit Nagal will open his campaign against homegrown talent SD Prajwal Dev. Top seed Pedro Martinez of Spain has been drawn against a qualifier in the first round.

Stasya wins silver at junior national equestrian meet

MUMBAI: Young equestrian talent Stasya Pandya of Mumbai delivered a commendable performance at the Junior National Equestrian Championship (JNEC), clinching a silver medal in the Dressage Team Event (Children 1 category). she scored 67.463 and played a key role in her team's podium finish.

WPL 2026: Aussie legend Lanning appointed UP Warriorz captain

MUMBAI: UP Warriorz on Sunday appointed Australian legend Meg Lanning as captain of the franchise ahead of the Women's Premier League (WPL) season. Lanning, who was signed for Rs 1.9 crore at the 2026 WPL Auction, has lifted two Women's Cricket World Cups and five Women's T20 World Cup titles.

Martyn able to talk now, responding well: Gilchrist

MELBOURNE: Former Australia cricketer Damien Martyn has made a "miraculous turnaround" and is now able to talk after coming out of an induced coma due to a bout of meningitis, according to his former teammate Adam Gilchrist. He also said that Martyn is responding to treatment.

UNLEARNING FIRST

Why 'unlearning' wins over 'resolving'

A lot of New Year change fails because old patterns stay active underneath the new goal. Unlearning clears the ground so a system can actually hold.

The weight of old patterns

You cannot build a skyscraper on a cracked foundation. If you want to "be more confident" and the habit of harsh self-criticism stays, the new habit collapses under the old one.

The myth of the "new you"

The "New Year, New Me" trope can make the present self feel like a problem. Unlearning focuses on what you have been carrying, outdated beliefs, coping habits, or defence mechanisms, and lets you put them down. Maintaining a "new" identity can feel exhausting. Letting go of a restrictive one can feel lighter, and easier to keep going.

HOW TO START YOUR UNLEARNING YEAR

Ask yourself these questions, then pick one thing to let go of

- **What belief about myself is holding me back?**
Examples include "I'm not a leader," "I'm bad at maths," "I always mess up interviews," or "I'm too late to start"

- **What "safety habit" do I use to avoid discomfort?**
Examples include scrolling when stressed, avoiding difficult conversations, over-editing work until you miss deadlines, or staying silent in meetings

- **What did I learn in my childhood that no longer serves my adult life?**
Examples include "asking for help is weakness," "rest is laziness," or "my worth depends on marks"

Remember: Growth is becoming a clearer version of yourself through subtraction, then structure.

DESIGN A YEAR THAT HOLDS

Pick at least one routine from each box and you will have a year that runs more on structure than on mood. Create versions that fit your timetable and energy. Start small, then adjust.

Learning and focus
- Ten-minute recap after learning sessions, rewriting key points in your own words on one page.
- Two evenings a week, solve a fixed set of practice questions without multitasking in any way.
- After any test, add one page to an exam log. Note what worked, what failed, what to fix next.

Body and mind
- Keep a steady sleep window most days, with a screen-time deadline you actually follow.
- Phone-free pockets for at least 30 minutes daily, with the device left in another room.
- One weekly reset activity that rejuvenates you, such as sport, music, reading, or a long walk.

Money and responsibilities
- Weekly money review to note spending, spot patterns, and set one clear rule for next week.
- Separate savings account for big goals, with an automatic transfer the day income lands.
- One fixed weekly slot for a family chore or duty, protected like a class, shift, or meeting.

Skills and career
- Two fixed learning blocks weekly for one course or practice project, tracked in a checklist.
- One portfolio hour each weekend to build, polish, or publish something you can show employers.
- Once a month, update your CV or LinkedIn with one achievement, metric, skill, or project link.

A COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGIST EXPLAINS TO NIKHIL ABHISHEK HOW HIDDEN BELIEFS, SAFETY HABITS, AND TINY DAILY SYSTEMS SHAPE WHETHER CHANGE FADES BY FEBRUARY OR STAYS THROUGH THE YEAR

WHAT MATTERS MORE THAN NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

EVERY January, students and young professionals sit down with fresh notebooks and a sense of resolve. New planners are opened, apps are downloaded, and lists appear on hostel walls and office desks. For a short while, life seems rearranged around what this year will finally fix. Then assignments pile up, shifts stretch, phones glow late into the night, and the resolution slips into the background without a formal goodbye.

It is easy to blame willpower. Counsellors see something else. They see students and young workers stepping into a new year with the same beliefs, the same habits, and the same environments that have shaped them for years. While the calendar changes, the inner script does not.

> *As we are all creatures of habit, our habits sometimes determine our personal, social and professional paths.*
> — Dr Saras Bhaskar, counselling psychologist and corporate consultant

reality check

"Resolutions of students crash early in the year due to several factors," says Dr Saras Bhaskar, a Chennai-based counselling psychologist and corporate consultant with over thirty years of experience in psychological counselling and human resource management. "First, their beliefs show up as small habits. As we are all creatures of habit, our habits sometimes determine our personal, social and professional paths. When unhealthy habits are not identified, acknowledged, and replaced with healthy habits, one tends to stagnate. Second, influences of social media, friends and families can demotivate or distract from the path of resolution," she notes. Underneath the enthusiasm, she often hears a familiar set of lines. "I am not smart enough", "success means perfection", "opportunities are scarce", "I must have it all figured out," and so on. The words sound like thoughts, yet they operate like rules. A belief that you are not smart enough leads to procrastination and avoiding tough subjects. Perfection as the only definition of success breeds burnout and fear of mistakes. When someone is convinced that opportunities are scarce, they hesitate to apply for internships or scholarships. The idea that you must have everything figured out can freeze any real step in career planning.

Then come the safety habits. These are behaviours that keep discomfort away while allowing a person to feel busy. Dr Saras lists patterns she sees repeatedly in students and young professionals: re-reading notes endlessly instead of practising problems, over-planning or making elaborate to-do lists instead of starting the first task, sticking to familiar work instead of tackling growth opportunities, delaying decisions with "I will research more before applying," and constant busy work like organising files or tweaking a resume instead of sending applications. Each habit reduces anxiety for the moment, but they drain momentum over time.

Seen through this lens, a failed resolution is not a mystery. A line written on 1 January is competing with years of belief and rehearsal. A student can write "study two hours every evening," yet if evenings have always meant scrolling, chatting and soft avoidance, the old identity will tend to win. The mind returns to what feels known and safe.

Change looks different when it is framed as small actions that build a new identity instead of a yearly promise. Dr Saras suggests experiments that are modest on effort and strong on consistency. One is what she calls the "Daily 15": spending 15 minutes each day on the chosen resolution. "It could be focused study, career research, or a skill practice or hobby development. Here consistency is important which will help build identity," she explains. Another is "one bold step a day", where a familiar task is swapped for a small stretch action such as sending a networking message or attempting a slightly more difficult problem set.

The environment around young people too can either help or hinder. "Whether at school, at work, or at home, there is a hype over grades or big wins which puts youngsters under pressure to excel or win," Dr Saras says. Comparisons with peers can lower self-esteem and reduce interest in giving their best effort. In the case of children, micromanaging every step of their routine may protect marks in the short term, yet it can weaken autonomy. Families and schools help when they back structured routines, allow for trial and error, and "encourage process over outcomes," she notes.

When resolutions keep ending in the same familiar dip, a more useful question emerges: what do you believe about yourself, which habits do you reach for when you are afraid, and what identity are you rehearsing every day? Once those patterns are visible, even modest systems and small daily experiments can begin to shift the direction of a year.

One day, done right

Habits stick more easily when you attach your systems to fixed moments in the day, not to motivation. Use this timeline to decide where each system belongs.

Morning
A clean starting point when the mind is uncluttered. Works well for anything that needs clarity or intention.

Transit or in-between moments
Short transitions where hands are free but attention is light. Ideal for small, repeatable routines that fit into movement.

Midday
A predictable pause in most schedules. Good for routines that need calm, consistency, and a defined midpoint.

Post-class or post-work
The first stable block after academic or work demands. Reliable for routines that need deeper focus.

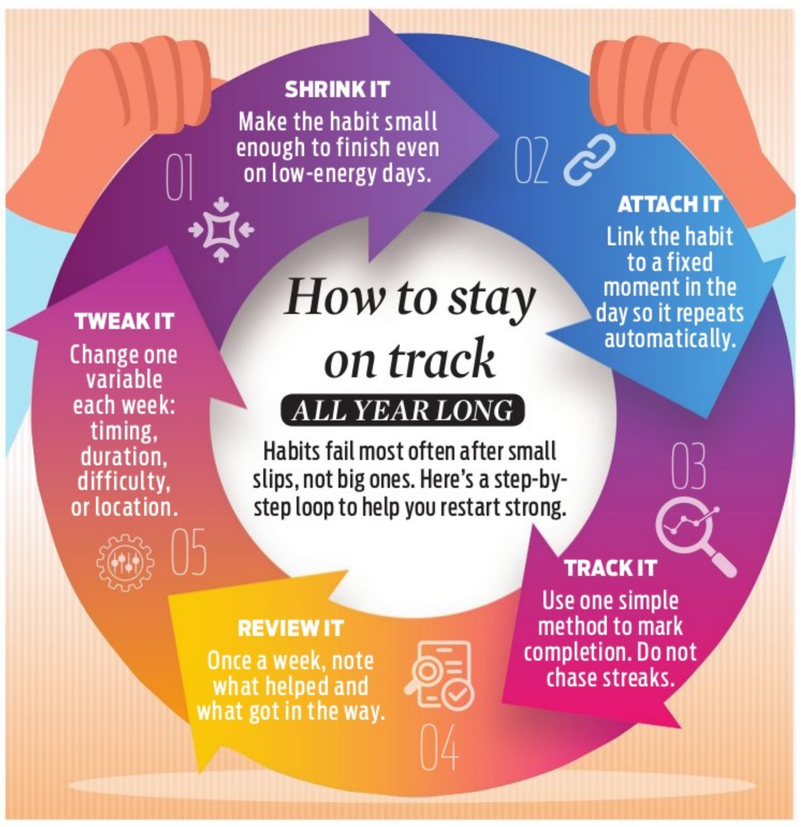
Evening
A gentle slowdown window. Fits routines that help you close loops and reduce the day's noise.

Night
A quiet reset point before sleep. Best for routines that prepare the next day or help you reflect briefly.

BIG TALK. SMALL STEPS.

Make your goals measurable through repetition, not motivation. Convert the intention into a routine, lock a time slot, and treat the first step like a non-negotiable appointment.

Vague resolution	A simple system (daily or weekly)	Tiny first step (do today)
"Get better grades this semester"	Four focused study blocks a week (45–60 minutes), phone kept away, plus one weekly revision slot	Pick one subject and schedule the first 45-minute block
"Stop procrastinating"	Start every task with a 10-minute timer, then take a 3-minute break, then continue	Set a 10-minute timer and do the first tiny chunk now
"Improve my English"	15 minutes daily: read one article, note five words, use two in a sentence	Pick one news article and write down five new words
"Build a skill for my career"	Two sessions a week on one skill (course, project, or portfolio), plus a Sunday recap of what you learned	Choose one skill and one free resource, then block one session
"Be more confident at work or in college"	One weekly "discomfort rep": speak once in a meeting, ask one question in class, or pitch one idea	Write one question you can ask in your next class or meeting
"Get fitter"	20 minutes movement, five days a week, plus one fixed meal or sleep rule	Go for a 10-minute walk right now, then set tomorrow's time
"Save more money"	Auto-transfer a fixed amount on salary or pocket-money day, plus a weekly expense check	Decide the amount and set up one auto-transfer
"Reduce screen time"	Move distracting apps off the home screen, set app limits, and create one phone-free hour daily	Turn off non-essential notifications & set one app limit


How to stay on track
ALL YEAR LONG
Habits fail most often after small slips, not big ones. Here's a step-by-step loop to help you restart strong.
01
SHRINK IT
Make the habit small enough to finish even on low-energy days.
02
ATTACH IT
Link the habit to a fixed moment in the day so it repeats automatically.
03
TRACK IT
Use one simple method to mark completion. Do not chase streaks.
04
REVIEW IT
Once a week, note what helped and what got in the way.
05
TWEAK IT
Change one variable each week: timing, duration, difficulty, or location.

Should this resolution survive?

A YES OR NO FILTER TO DECIDE WHAT TO KEEP, REDESIGN, PARK, OR DROP

Q1: Would you still choose this if nobody knew about it?
- **No →** DROP IT.
- **Yes →** Go to Q2.

Q2: Does it match the person you want to become this year?
- **No → PARK IT.** Write it on a "Later list" and revisit in a few months.
- **Yes →** Go to Q3.

Q3: Can you name a small action for it that fits inside one week?
- **No → REDESIGN IT.** Your idea is too vague. Convert it into a weekly action.
- **Yes →** Go to Q4.

Q4: Is this action doable on a busy week, without special conditions?
- **No → SHRINK IT.** Reduce time, scope, or frequency until it fits real life.
- Yes → KEEP IT.

Process is progress! Why 'showing up' trumps perfection

A young professional tells Karthikeya S how they plan to stay motivated this New Year

OFTEN, New Year's resolutions are treated as a zero-sum game, where even a single missed day can feel like failure. Instead of chasing perfection, one young working professional chose to build a system that rewarded consistency and showing up, even imperfectly.

A system of accountability

To avoid derailing their progress, Tina Medi, a film professional, uses a simple tool: a report card. Tina designed the report card to log their progress from Monday to Friday across various habits. Each log amounts to 1 mark, with the habits spanning across five categories: skin, body, reading, writing, and language.

"I figured I'm more effective with an accountability system that reflects my progress, rather than vague goals," they explain, adding that setting realistic expectations helps them avoid the pressure of their own standards. "For example, instead of a target weight, I resolve to work out at least four times a week. If I do that, I'm successful."

For the system to work effectively, Tina also logs the days they skip activities. "Let's say I skip skincare one day; I would log that. When I get back on track, I would log that too," they say. This ensures that one bad day does not undo weeks of effort.

EXPRESS ILLUSTRATION

Staying motivated

While trying to keep up with multiple activities, Tina built their routine around one anchor habit — skincare. Prioritising this helps them stay motivated, even when other habits slip. "Now, I can do skincare without pressure. By week four, I can establish another anchor activity," they reveal. For Tina, the system demands a mindset shift. "The goal is showing up, even on bad days," they note.

Making good habits easier

If the setup is right, the habit needs less effort. Let the environment do half the work to reduce friction and increase follow-through.

Physical space
- [✓] Keep only the materials needed for your next task within reach
- [✓] Assign one clear surface as a no-phone area
- [✓] Place essential tools in visible, easy-to-grab spots
- [✓] Keep a small, consistent workspace setup to reduce reset time

Digital space
- [✓] Turn off non-essential notifications
- [✓] Move high-distraction apps off the home screen
- [✓] Keep learning or work tools in the first row for quick access
- [✓] Use one simple calendar or list that opens instantly

Social space
- [✓] Tell one person your key routine for the week
- [✓] Have a partner you check in with once a week
- [✓] Set a simple boundary sentence for interruptions
- [✓] Create one group or chat dedicated only to study or work

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05•01•2026
MONDAY

DAY'S DIARY

Valuable Angel

On this day in 2017, Brazilian supermodel Adriana Lima was crowned as the most valuable Victoria's Secret Angel

EARNING THE TITLE

From 1999 to 2018, Adriana embodied Victoria's Secret's fantasy allure, earning the title in 2017 for her sales impact on lingerie and fragrances

VICTORIA'S SECRET ERA

Adrianna was in demand for fashion campaigns, runways and posing for Fendi, Vesace and MiuMiu. She also appeared in editions of *Vogue* and *Marie Claire*

RECENT COMEBACK

Adriana, after her retirement in 2018, renewed ties in 2024, attending and participating in Schiaparelli's Paris Fashion Week show

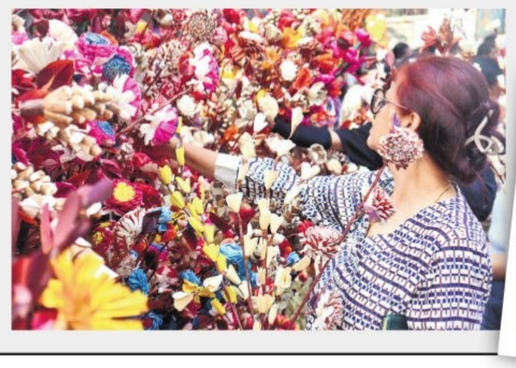
Here's what's happening in ooru!

PG 2

COLOURS RUN RIOT!

CHITRA KALA PARISHATH'S campus came alive with all shades of colours as visitors thronged to Chitra Santhe 2026 to peruse and purchase creations by over 1,500 artists from 22 states and four union territories. Pencils were put to use sketching life-like portraits, caricaturists brought a touch of humour to the page, kids' faces were painted in intricate designs, and canvases captured worlds within themselves. With the exhibition welcoming visitors until Jan 12, Bengalureans are in for a week of basking in beauty and skill.

PICS: KEVIN NASHON



ANJALI RAM

WHEN socialite-entrepreneur Kim Kardashian stepped out in her sculptural, exaggerated suits in *All's Flair*, the internet rushed to decode the look. But the fashion world wasn't surprised, because the modern suit has been quietly making a change for years, shedding its rigid corporate skin and emerging as something more expressive and unapologetically dramatic.

Across runways, red carpets and increasingly many workplaces, designers and wearers are treating the suit like a canvas, leaving behind all the inhibitions. "Traditional tailoring still has its place, but the modern suit feels freer and expressive. Hence, designers are playing with volume, shape and personality instead of keeping it strict and formal," says model-actor Shaun Romy. That creative freedom is what has allowed suiting to loosen its historical association with conformity.

Kim's larger-than-life silhouettes in the legal drama *All's Flair* represent what many call the new language of power dressing. Gone are the days when authority came from subtle shoulder pads and quiet lines. "Traditional power suiting relied on sharp tailoring and firm structure to communicate authority. Kim's sculptural silhouettes push that to an almost theatrical level – power turned into performance. It's bold, unapologetic and visually dominant. Instead of blending in confidently, the wearer takes up space deliberately," explains fashion stylist Gousia Galib Khan.

When you look at it, oversized shoulders, exaggerated lapels, cinched waists and long, sweeping trousers are no longer outliers – they're the aesthetic of the moment. Image consultant Sonia Pardesi sees these choices as both artistic and symbolic. "These proportions reject the idea that power must be subtle. They also reinforce confidence. The silhouette becomes a visual assertion of individuality," she says, adding, "Materials such as bonded jersey, thick wool crepes, memory fabrics and structured knits hold shape exceptionally well, allowing designers to build volume and sharp edges without collapsing." But modern suiting isn't just about size, as Romy notes, "There's softness, flow and intention showing up in the tailoring. It still has presence, but now it's shaped around the woman rather than the other way around."

India is playing a unique role in this transformation. Romy loves pairing suiting with Indian jewellery or textiles to create identity-driven looks, while content creator Shreya Vishakant blends saree drapes with blazers for Indo-fusion power statements. She also points to actors like Manvita Kamath's past look, which fuses Indian craft with contemporary suiting.

Materials like bonded fabrics, neoprene, Indian brocade, structured knits, technical wools and even foam-backed textiles are allowing designers to sculpt garments almost like objects. Pardesi explains, "Advanced fabrication techniques, like bonding, laser cutting and internal architecture, also create clean lines and exaggerated curves that traditional tailoring could never achieve." Whereas Khan adds, These techniques give the suit a sculptural body. It lets designers mould it instead of just tailoring it." In the era of instant visibility, celebrities remain crucial accelerators. "Celebrities translate runway concepts into cultural moments, pushing new silhouettes into mainstream fashion faster," says Vishakant. When someone like Kardashian steps out in an architectural suit, the ripple effect is immediate - trickling into retail, red carpets, and even workwear. If traditional power dressing was about blending in with authority, today's exaggerated suiting is about being seen. As Pardesi puts it, "Power now comes from authenticity. These suits reflect a shift toward identity-driven style." Adding onto that, she predicts future work wardrobes will adopt softer, expressive tailoring, while red carpets will see sculptural suits rival gowns for dominance.

Shaun Romy

A bold suit look styled by Gousia Galib Khan

PIC: @MANEKHA_ON INSTAGRAM

Style of Power

With Kim Kardashian's *All's Flair* suits getting spotlight, *CE* explores how modern suiting is shedding its corporate past, rewriting the rules and reshaping the silhouette of power itself

Oversized shoulders, exaggerated lapels, cinched waists and long, sweeping trousers are the aesthetic of the moment

A still from *All's Flair*

Swami Chaitanya Keerti, one of the famous spiritual guru Osho's (Acharya Rajneesh) close disciples since the 1970s, was in the city recently to conduct a 3-day dynamic meditation camp

Spiritual Dynamics

MAHIMA NAGARAJU

EVEN as new-age spirituality picked up steam around the world in the late 1960s, with the West becoming fascinated by Eastern spiritual practices, including Indian ones like yoga and meditation, 20-year-old college student **Swami Chaitanya Keerti** did not care much for it. "I always avoided the spirituality column, thinking there would be some nonsense there, but one day, I thought I might be becoming prejudiced against religion and decided to read everything. That was the day Osho had written a piece – 'Is man a machine?', which talked about how we function like machines, becoming happy when someone says nice things and sad when it is bad and how the remote control remains in others' hands. His point was that meditators would respond, not react," he recalls.

That piece took him down the path of 'neo sanyas' shaping up around Osho, dropping out of college, and taking sanyas in 1971, when the guru was operating out of a Bombay apartment. What he remembers is a magnetism: "My first meeting with him, I was alone and I could not look into his eyes because there was so much radiance. He asked me 'What brought you here?' It took me a while to answer that, but I said, 'I want to be with you'. Sometimes, I would write things down before meeting him, because when I looked into his eyes, I would forget."

55 years later, he is still on that journey, teaching dynamic meditation, a cathartic meditation process popularised by Osho, most recently at The School of Ancient Wisdom in Devanahalli, organised by Friends of Osho. He explains, "Osho felt that people suppress so much, unless they detox, meditation cannot happen. So you have to get rid of it with catharsis." The steps involve breathing vigorously, releasing pent-up emotion through open expression, followed by a phase of yelling 'hoo' to activate the root chakra. The last two steps, 15 minutes each, involve freezing in position and expressing joy.

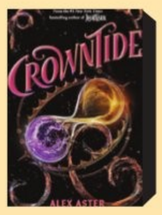
When it comes to Osho, fresh in popular memory are two documentaries about the guru's infamous disciple Ma Anand Sheela's return to India, *Searching for Sheela* (2021) and *Wild Wild Country* (2018). The latter investigated Ma Anand's involvement in a mass salmonella poisoning case in Wasco County, Oregon, where the guru's 'Rajneeshpuram' ashram was, the duo's arrest and more. Among those who lived through the time, Keerti says he 'loved the documentary because it took Osho's name all over the world,' adding, "There were many people against us at the time (in the US), but Osho never bothered about the negative."

On the controversies that have followed Osho's attitudes toward sexuality and spirituality Keerthi says, "All Osho was saying is 'do not suppress sexual energy, live it and transform it'. If you are fasting for two or three days, then all you think of is food. When you bring consciousness to it, then even a single experience can be a liberating one."

AUTOS & ACES

Before the baseline battles begin, a few of the 10th Dafa News Bengaluru Open 2026 stars took a quick city detour. Ahead of the tourney, Jay Clarke, Benjamin Hassan and Cedrik-Marcel Stebe swapped tennis courts for an early Sunday morning autorickshaw ride, ticking off Vidhana Soudha and Bengaluru Palace with family and friends. The team soaked in the city's energy, and of course, the nipping weather, before the ATP Challenger 125 on Monday, proving that even a game prep comes with a little joyride.

BOOK NOOK

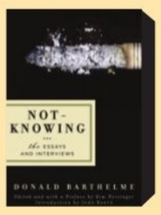


Crowntide
By Alex Aster

The fourth instalment of Alex Aster's bestselling *Lightlark Saga* follows Isla Crown as she enters Skyshade to confront her ancestor Lark. With kingdoms at stake, alliances tested and destiny rewritten, Isla must survive, return, and decide the future of realms.

In Your Dreams
By Sarah Adams

A homecoming to Rome, Kentucky, sparks a new romance – and drama – between two old family friends, from the New York Times bestselling author of *When in Rome, Practice Makes Perfect*, and *Beg, Borrow or Steal*.



Not-Knowing: The Essays and Interviews
By Donald Barthelme

The wildly varied essays in *Not-Knowing* combine to form a posthumous manifesto of one of America's masters of literary experiment. Here are Barthelme's thoughts on writing, art, architecture, film and city life.

Fast Track
By Fern Michaels

The 10th page-turning adventure in #1 New York Times bestselling author Fern Michaels' iconic series of female friendship and sweet revenge is back with a fresh new look!

GRACE PERSONIFIED

Bharatanatyam dancer Meera Ratnagiri strikes a pose during her recent performance at the Bengaluru International Classical Dance Festival presented by Shantala Arts Trust and Soorya Performing Arts at Seva Sadan, Malleswaram | **NAGARAJA GADEKAL**

QUICKFIX

SPICY TOFU-CORIANDER SPREAD

INGREDIENTS

- **Firm tofu:** 100-120g
- **Fresh coriander leaves:** 1 handful
- **Lemon juice:** ½-1 tsp (optional)
- **Green chilli:** 1
- **Salt:** to taste
- **Olive oil or ghee:** ½ tsp (optional)

METHOD

- Crumble or roughly chop the tofu.
- Add tofu, green chilli, coriander, salt and lemon juice to a blender. Blend into a coarse or smooth paste depending on preference.
- Adjust salt, chilli or lemon. Spread generously on toasted sourdough. Drizzle a few drops of olive oil if you like.
- You can add a spoon of thick curd to the tofu while blending for extra creaminess.

Contributed by **Annapoorna** Bengaluru

DR VIVEK ARORA

The expert is a senior veterinarian, Crown Vet, Delhi.

Our half-stray dog sometimes kills kittens, sometimes lets them go. Any reason for this difference?

ASK AN XPERT

This behaviour can be distressing to observe, but it is relatively common, particularly in dogs with a stray or mixed background. The variation in response is typically driven by instinct rather than aggression. Certain kittens may activate the dog's prey drive because of their movements, vocalisations or small size, while others may not elicit the same reaction. In some situations, the dog may show simple curiosity or tolerance. Stress levels, territorial behaviour, prior experiences and the dog's emotional state can all influence these responses. Due to the potential risk, careful supervision and restricting the dog's access to kittens are essential.

FITBIT

HOW GRADUAL PROGRESSION IN WORKOUTS LEADS TO STRONGER AND MORE RESILIENT MUSCLES

If you've ever picked up a heavier dumbbell after a few weeks of training or pushed yourself to do more reps than before, you've already experienced progressive overloading, one of the most effective principles in strength training. At its core, progressive overload is about gradually increasing the demand placed on your body so your muscles have a reason to adapt, grow stronger and perform better.

WHAT IS PROGRESSIVE OVERLOADING?

- Progressive overload refers to the systematic increase of stress on muscles over time. This can mean lifting heavier weights, doing more repetitions, increasing workout volume, reducing rest time, or slowing down movements to increase time under tension.
- Without progressive overload, the body adapts quickly, leading to plateaus where strength and muscle gains stall.

WHY PROGRESSIVE OVERLOAD WORKS

- When you train, you create microscopic damage to muscle fibres. During recovery, the body repairs these fibres, making them stronger and more resilient. Once adapted, the same stimulus no longer challenges the muscle so progress slows unless the load is increased.
- Research consistently shows that gradually increasing training demands improves both muscle strength and hypertrophy when paired with adequate nutrition and recovery.

PRACTICAL WAYS TO APPLY PROGRESSIVE OVERLOAD

- **Increase weight gradually:** Add small increments once your current load feels manageable.
- **Add repetitions:** Perform more reps with the same weight before increasing load.
- **Increase sets:** Add an extra set to increase overall training volume.
- **Reduce rest periods:** Shorter rest increases muscular and cardiovascular demand.
- **Improve tempo:** Slowing down movements increases time under tension.
- **Progress exercise difficulty:** Move from easier to more challenging variations.

KEY RULES TO FOLLOW

- Increase only one variable at a time.
- Avoid jumps larger than 5-10% per week.
- Prioritise proper form over heavier loads.
- Allow sufficient recovery between sessions.
- Persistent soreness, fatigue or declining performance are signs to scale back and recover.

CONCLUSION

Progressive overloading isn't about training harder everyday, it's about training smarter and more intentionally. Small, steady increases compound over time, leading to sustainable strength gains and muscle growth while reducing injury risk.

Consistency, patience, and recovery are what turn progressive overload into long-term results.

By Dhruva Sivakumar, fitness expert, cult – a fitness and wellness platform

WHATWHENWHYWHERE

Game On

Step into an all-in-one play zone where bowling lanes, laser tag arenas, VR experiences and interactive pixel games keep the energy high. Whether you're chasing strikes, testing reflexes or competing with friends, this event is sure to give you thrills!

WHEN: January 5, 11am onwards
WHERE: The Grid, Kalyan Nagar
CALL: 97432 00552

After Hours

Wrap up your day with sharp punchlines and easy humour at this late-night stand-up set featuring ooru comics. Expect quick jokes, relatable stories and an unfiltered hour of laughs that lands best after dark.

WHEN: January 5, 9:30pm
WHERE: TAG Comedy Club, Koramangala
DETAILS: bookmyshow.com

Monday Groove

Shake off the weekday blues with a high-energy Monday night. Expect club-ready beats, a lively dance floor as DJ Jasmeet sets the pace for an easy, no-pressure start to the week. **WHEN:** January 5, 8pm

WHERE: Happy Brew Bar & Kitchen, Koramangala
DETAILS: district.in

Vine Break

Head out for a relaxed vineyard visit with guided walks through the estate, a peek into the winemaking process and a tasting session that introduces you to different grape varieties and flavours. The event is an easy day trip for wine lovers and curious explorers alike.

WHEN: January 5, 10.30am onwards
WHERE: Grover Zampa Vineyards, near Nandi Hills
CALL: 63669 46331

Brew & Brush

Unwind with a calming coffee-painting session that blends mindful art-making with the comfort of warm brews. This guided workshop focuses on gentle creativity and relaxed pacing, requiring no prior experience.

WHEN: January 5, 5.30pm
WHERE: The Coffee Brewery, Mahadevapura
DETAILS: bookmyshow.com

Bounce Back

Hit the court with a beginner-friendly 75-minute basketball session that combines cardio, strength, and skills at an easy, go-at-your-own-pace rhythm. Designed for working professionals and students, it's a fun way to get moving or try basketball for the first time.

WHEN: January 5, 6.45am
WHERE: MN Krishna Rao Park Basketball Court, Jayanagar
DETAILS: district.in

Smash It Out

Trade talking it out for breaking it down with a guided smash session designed for pure stress release. Suit up, step into a protected zone and let loose on bottles, ceramics, and breakables in a safe, high-energy setting.

WHEN: January 5, 10am onwards
WHERE: The Smash Room, BTM 1st Stage
DETAILS: thesmashroom.in

EXPRESS CONNECT

HAVE A RECIPE OR ART WORK TO SHARE, OR A QUESTION TO ASK?

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ARTCORNER

SILKEN SPREAD

Bhavna Kakar's rare Pre-Partition Phulkaris and Baghs are from the private and family collections of designer Amit Hansraj and Brig Surinder & Shyama Kakar

Statue of Liberty by Amy Sherald

CRACKDOWNS ON ART

THE political climate in many countries has left cultural institutions in a state of instability. Governments used their authoritarian control over budgets to interfere with programmes. Funding cuts were used to coerce museums to align with government approved ideologies. The Trump administration used this with the Smithsonian Museum in order to force a content review. Most institutions also face the pressure of censorship, with orders given indirectly to avoid controversial topics. Artist Amy Sherald cancelled her show at the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery after officials expressed doubts about the inclusion of her portrait of a Black Transgender woman as the Statue of Liberty, as they did not want to antagonise Trump. Germany also saw the cancellation of shows which had Gaza as the focus, as it went against the state's pro-Israel stance.

The Indian government denied permission to screen 19 films at the 2025 International Film Festival of Kerala in Dec, without stating any concrete reasons. Films on Palestine were on the list, along with a few, like the Spanish film *Beef*, that were banned merely for their titles. The tensions within federally funded institutions due to interference have definitely affected artistic expression, and 2025 was certainly a tough year for most museums that struggled to retain their autonomy and integrity.

WHEN THE HAMMER CAME DOWN TO SMASH RECORDS

The Dream (The Bed) by Frida Kahlo

THE year was a good one at the auction house. After 20 minutes of intense bidding, Gustav Klimt's *Portrait of Elisabeth Lederer* sold for a record $236.4 million, making it the second most expensive artwork ever sold at an auction, with da Vinci's Salvator Mundi obviously occupying the first place. The painting is a full-length portrait of the daughter of Klimt's patrons. Confiscated by the Nazis after Austria's annexation in 1938, the painting was acquired by a private collector when it resurfaced in the market in the early 80s. After decades out of public view, the artwork made a splash when it appeared at a Sotheby's auction in November.

It was more than just a good year for women artists at art auctions. Mexican artist Frida Kahlo's self-portrait from 1940, titled *The Dream (The Bed)*, fetched $54.7 million at Sotheby's in November, making her painting the most expensive artwork by a female artist ever sold at an auction. As for living women artists, South African artist Marlene Dumas' painting from 1997, titled *Miss January*, sold for $13.63 million at Christie's, shattering previous auction records for contemporary female artists. Although we still have a long way to go to bridge the gender pay gap, these records are positive signs of the growing recognition of female artists in an otherwise male-dominated art market.

Portrait of Elisabeth Lederer by Gustav Klimt

Of hues, heists and hegemony

2025 will be remembered for escalated conflicts, technological advancements and a multitude of things for which we must feel grateful. **Jitha Karthikeyan** looks back at the year in art

Louvre heist

BEST DRAMA OF THE YEAR

THE Louvre Heist, without a doubt, was dubbed the drama of the year. Not just that, the theft of priceless crown jewels in broad daylight from the Louvre Museum in Paris will perhaps go down in history as the heist of the century. Petty local criminals executed this daring plan by gaining access to the first floor with a mechanical ladder and cutting through the glass, before escaping on a scooter with their loot.

2025 saw several such museum robberies. Another audacious raid that even used explosives happened at the Drents Museum in the Netherlands in January, which led to the loss of invaluable Dacian gold artefacts.

In September, a museum in Bristol reported the theft of 600 artefacts linked to the British Empire. In true Hollywood style, two masked gunmen walked into an exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in São Paulo one December morning, seized eight artworks by Henri Matisse and five by Brazilian modernist Portinari and fled on foot. In November, a Roman museum was robbed, and numerous Roman-era gold coins were taken away, while more than 1,000 items were stolen from the Museum of California in October.

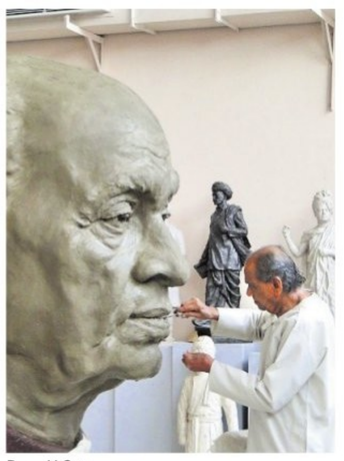
There has been an increasing interest in cultural artefacts and masterpieces by renowned artists among criminal networks and it is time for all institutions to reassess their security measures to ensure the protection of their collections.

Frank Gehry

A WORLD LOST FOREVER

THE world of art bid adieu to many luminaries this year. While the world mourned the loss of renowned filmmaker David Lynch, iconic architect Frank Gehry, artist Alison Knowles (a prominent figure in the Fluxus Movement) and several other artists, collectors and museum directors, India also said farewell to many who left enduring legacies. Himmat Shah, one of India's foremost sculptors, passed away in March, Mohammad Abdul Rauf, a National Award-winning craftsman in Bidri art, left us in February, while Ram V Sutar, who became internationally famous for the world's tallest statue, the monumental Statue of Unity, died in December. Although these brilliant minds may no longer physically exist, they will continue to inspire and influence art for generations.

Himmat Shah



Ram V Sutar

NUGGETS

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Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway will host a series of themed Sunday brunches through January at its all-day dining restaurant Feast, bringing together international flavours and regional cuisines. Under the expertise of Chef Sajid Patel, the lineup begins with World on a Plate on January 4, featuring a global spread that includes sushi, Thai curries, Italian pasta stations, Spanish small plates, and Middle Eastern mezze. On January 25, Hidden Flavours of India will turn the focus to lesser-known regional dishes such as akki rotti, koli saaru, Chettinad specialities and Awadhi preparations. The month concludes with India on a Plate on January 26, marking Republic Day with chaat counters, tandoori grills, classic Indian mains and tricolour-themed desserts bringing together flavours from Kashmir to Kerala. For reservations, call 87924 93438.

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THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS **CLASSIFIEDS**

PUBLIC NOTICE
CHANGE OF NAME

CHANGE OF NAME
I, TANVI SUHAS, W/o Suhas Sudhakar, Residing at No. 391/21, 13th Main, 8th Cross, RMV Extension, Sadashivanagar, Bengaluru-560080. I, state that I have changed My Name from TANVI GITAN KOLHAPURKAR to **TANVI SUHAS** Vide affidavit dated 30/12/2025. Sworn before Notary, B.S. Padmaprasad, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **VALLIAMMAI RAMAKRISHNAN**, Indian, resident of J 001, Princetown Apartment, Shettyhalli Main Road, Airforce Training College, Shettyhalli, Jalahalli West, Bengaluru – 560015, Karnataka, have changed my name from **VALLIAMMAI RAMAKRISHNAN** to **VALLIKAN RAMAKRISHNAN** (Real and Final Name) sworn vide affidavit dated 03-01-2026 before Notary **R Basavaraja**, Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **GANESHA KEMBODI VENKATESHAPPA**, S/o. Venkateshappa, residing at #115, 4th Cross, 2nd Main, 10th Block, Nagarbhavi, Bengaluru 560072, have changed my name to **GANESH KEMBODI VENKATESHAPPA**, vide Affidavit dated: 03/01/2026, sworn before Notary **MEER HASSAN,** Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **HARI SUBRAMANIYAN S R (HARI SUBRAMANIYAN SUBRAMANIAM RAMAKRISHNAN)**, aged about 21 years, S/o. Ramakrishnan Subramaniam, C201 Century Central Mango Garden Layout, Bikasipura Kanakpura Main Road, Near Konankunte Metro Station, Bengaluru-560062, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **HARI SUBRAMANIYAN** to **HARI SUBRAMANIYAN S R (HARI SUBRAMANIYAN SUBRAMANIAM RAMAKRISHNAN)**, vide affidavit dated 02.01.2026, sworn to before K.V. Mani, Advocate & Notary, Govt. of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, SHANTHI, (Date of Birth 01/04/1973) W/o Govindaraju, resident Old Street, Ward no. 06. Talakadu Post, Talakadu, Mysore Karnataka 571122, today at Bengaluru have changed my name to **SHANTHAMMA** vide affidavit dated 03/01/2026 sworn before advocate and notary Uday Kariyappa B.G., Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, BOLLA SRILAKSHMI, aged about 40 years, is Wife of Service No. JC 311611N Rank: SUB MAJ, Name: RAMACHANDRUDU BOLLA. Unit: Depot BN, MEG & Centre, resident of House: Rompivalasa village, Pathapatnam Mandal, Srikakulam Dist, Andhra Pradesh 532214 have changed my name from **B SRILAKSHMI to BOLLA SRILAKSHMI** vide affidavit dated 03/01/2026 sworn before advocate and notary N. Thulasi, Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, hitherto known as **SHIVAPPA S/O YALLANAGOUDA TOTAD** residing at Arya-Bhogapur At Post Makapur-584125, Tq: Lingasugur, Dist: Raichur have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as **SHIVARAJ TOTAD S/o YALLANAGOUDA TOTAD** It is certified that I have complied with other legal requirements in this connection. Vide affidavit dated: 03-01-2026 sworn before Notary Krishna at Raichur

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **GUNJEET KOUR** (Old Name) R/at No.114,V2,VAIBHAV APPT, F MAIN, VYSYA BANK COLONY, SHANTHINIKETAN LAYOUT, HULIMAVU ,Bengaluru 560076 have changed my name to **GUNJEET KAUR RISAM** (New Name) vide affidavit dated: 1/1/2026 before Notary **Sivakumara.M.N** Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Adhvik V B S/o Vydyalingam, aged about 34 years, residing at No 39, 3rd Cross, Kempegowda Nagar, Magadi Main Road, Vishwaneedam Post, Bangalore - 560091 have changed my Father's name from VYDHYALINGAIAH to VYDYALINGAM vide affidavit dated 02.01.2026 sworn before Notary M. Devaraja

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SRINIVASA**, S/o. Apayyanna, residing at Konnaghatta Doddaballapur, Bangalore-561203, Karnataka, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **SEENAPPA** to **SRINIVASA,** vide affidavit dated 03.01.2026, sworn to before M. Radhamma, Advocate & Notary, Govt. of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SAISHREE R PATIL**, W/o. Ravi B Patil, aged about 42 years, residing at Flat No. SF-6, Lifestyle Terraces, No. 804-806, 12th Main, Hoysala Road, Near Swathi Hotel, Nagarabhavi, Bengaluru-560072, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **SAI SRI** to **SAISHREE R PATIL,** henceforth I shall be known as the **SAISHREE R PATIL** for all purposes, vide affidavit dated 03.01.2026, sworn to before H.H. Nagaraj, Advocate & Notary Public, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, NAZ PARVEEN, resident of No. 1585/1, H.M. Mohalla, S.N.Road, Channapatna Town-562 160, Bangalore South Dist., Karnataka State, INDIA, have changed my name to **NAAZ PARVEEN** vide affidavit dated 03/01/2026 sworn before advocate and notary A.R. Nagendra, Channapatna Tq.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Service No. 16125480X Rank: HAV, Name: DAYA RAM, Unit: HQ MEG & Centre, resident of House: Mamria Asampur Village, Khori Post office, Rewari Dist, Haryana 123101 have changed my son's name from **JIYAAN to JIYAAN YADAV** vide affidavit dated 03/01/2026 sworn before advocate and notary N. Thulasi, Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Chambakur Narayana Bhattar Veena,** aged 46 years W/o **Chambakur Sreenivasa Narayana Bhattar** resident of No 8 1st Cross Rachenahalli Main Road SRK Nagar Thanisandra Bengaluru-560077, have changed my name to **Kannabhattachar Veena** vide affidavit dated: 03/01/2026 Before Notary **A.R.Muneer Ahmed** Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **THILAKCHANDARLAL**, S/o Balajilal, residing at No. 582, 1st Floor, Ramaiah Reddy Colony, Basavanagar, Bangalore – 560037, hereby declare that my name appears as **THILAKCHANDARLAL B** in my 10th Marks Card and as **THILAKCHANDARLAL** in my Aadhaar Card. I have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as **THILAKCHANDARLAL** for all official and legal purposes, vide affidavit **Dated: 19.12.2025** sworn before A. Idinabba, B.Sc., LL.B, Advocate and Notary public, Indiranagar, Bangalore-560008.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Mr. Viswanath Reddy,** S/o. Sri Hanumantharayappa, age 38 years, Native of No. 5-6-17, Ward No. 5, Hindupur, Ananthapura District, Andhra Pradesh-515201, presently residing at No. 26, Venugopalaswamy Street, Manjunathnagar Road, Bagalagunte, Bengaluru-560073, do hereby declare that I have changed my son's name from **Dakshay .V.S** to **A.H. Dishan (i.e., Alajjiagari Hanumantharayappa Dishan),** vide affidavit dated 30.0.2025, sworn to before B. Chitra, Advocate & Notary Public, Govt. of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SHASHIKALA** residing at # 23, AMMA ASHRAMA ROAD, NEAR AMRITA VIDYALAYAM SCHOOL, BHUVANESHWARI NAGAR, BANGALORE KARNATAKA, 560056 have changed my name from **SHASHIKALA GOVIND to SHASHIKALA** vide affidavit dated 02/01/2026 sworn before advocate and notary Devaraja .E, Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Mr. SHAUNAK SHANTANU MAHAJAN, Aged about 20 years, S/o.Shantanu Suresh Mahajan, resident of No.6, MIMS Northbrook, Chikkagubbi Road Sonam Layout Visthar, Next to Good Shepherd School, Doddagubbi, Kothanur Post, Bangalore, Karnataka-560077, have changed my name from **SHAUNAK MAHAJAN to SHAUNAK SHANTANU MAHAJAN** vide affidavit dated 03/01/2026 sworn before advocate and notary D. Rajanna, Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **S. SNEHA** W/o Shaik Mehraj, aged about 48 years, residing at No.3/1, 1st Cross, New Patnoolpet, Kalasipalyam, Bengaluru-560 002. Hereby declare that, I have changed my name from **'S. SNEHA'** to **'AYESHA'**, vide Affidavit dated 01.03.2021, Sworn before Advocate and Notary V. Rangaraju, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **PRIYANKA SINGHI** (Old Name), Resident at S1,OASIS SPRINGS APARTMENT, 3RD MAIN,SAMRAT LAYOUT, SARVOBHOGAM NAGAR, BANNERGHATA ROAD, AREKERE, Bengaluru 560076 have changed my name to **PRIYANKA DUGAR** (New Name) vide affidavit dated: 1/1/2026 Before Notary **Sivakumara.M.N** Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **TANZIYA,** D/o. Zameer Pasha, Residing at No.125/5, Gayathri Layout, 22nd Cross, Basavanapura Main Road, K R Puram, Bengaluru-560036, have changed my name to **TANZIYA TARANNUM,** Vide Affidavit Dated: 03.01.2026 before notary **MEER HASSAN,** Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **LEESHA MAHESH @ LEESHASRI MAHESH**, D/o. Mahesh Kumar Shanmugam, aged about 20 years, residing at Nisarga, No. 63, M.K. Layout, Maragondanahalli, Hulimangala Post, EC-I, Bengaluru-560105, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **LEESHA MAHESH** to **LEESHASRI MAHESH**, vide affidavit dated 03.01.2026, sworn to before Puttaramaiah, Advocate & Notary, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, NAGESH K, residing at # 23, AMMA ASHRAMA ROAD, NEAR AMRITA VIDYALAYAM SCHOOL, BHUVANESHWARI NAGAR, BANGALORE KARNATAKA, 560056 have changed my name from **NAGESH to NAGESH K** vide affidavit dated 02/01/2026 sworn before advocate and notary Devaraja .E, Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Mrs. PRANITHA THYLE, Aged about 39 years, W/o. Mark Vincent Thyle, D/o. Late D Chinna Dorai, resident of Flat No.005, The Potters Hand Apartment, Ground Floor, Doddagubbi Main Road, 78/1, Kyalasanahalli, Kothanur, Bangalore North, Bangalore, Karnataka- 560077, Have changed my name from **PRANITHA SHAILI DORAI to PRANITHA THYLE** vide affidavit dated 03/01/2026, sworn before D. Rajanna, Advocate and Notary Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I **AMRUTH CARIAPPA A** resident of G 001, Godrej Aqua, Hosahalli, Hunasamaranahalli, Bengaluru, Karnataka, Pin 562157 do hereby changed my name from **AMRUTH CARIAPPA** to **AMRUTH CARIAPPA A** vide affidavit dated 03.01.2026 sworn to before Mohan Kumar N, Advocate & Notary Public, Govt. of India, Bengaluru

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7899930039 Brokers Excuse.

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7899930039

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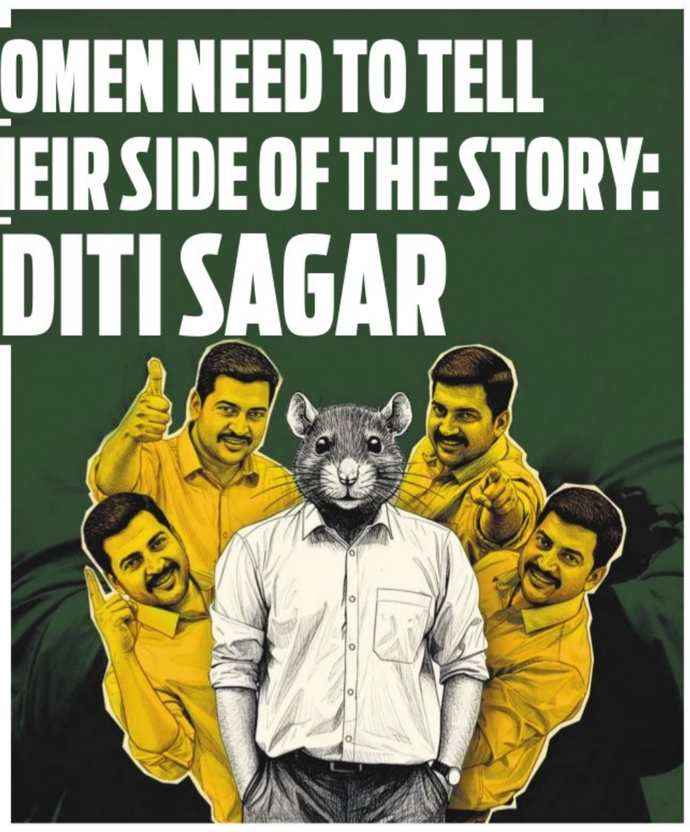
Aditi Sagar

WOMEN NEED TO TELL THEIR SIDE OF THE STORY: ADITI SAGAR



Aditi Sagar on stepping in as the female lead in the upcoming drama thriller *Heggana Muddu*, starring Poornachandra Mysore, and produced by Dhananjaya's Daali Pictures

A SHARADHAA

DAALI Dhananjaya, who is currently busy with his acting commitments, remains equally invested in steering his production house, Daali Pictures. The actor-producer has begun the new year by officially unveiling *Heggana Muddu* as the sixth film under his banner. Known for backing rooted and unconventional stories such as Badava Rascal, Head Bush, and Tagaru Palya, Daali Pictures has steadily carved a strong identity in Kannada cinema. With JC ready for release, the banner continues to expand its portfolio, and *Heggana Muddu*, a drama thriller, becomes the latest addition to its growing and diverse filmography.

Directed by Avinash Balekkala in his debut outing, *Heggana Muddu* stars Poornachandra Mysore as the male lead. The film marks a significant step for Aditi Sagar, daughter of actor and art director Arun Sagar, as she steps into the spotlight as the female lead for the first time. A trained singer, Aditi was earlier seen in Shivrajkumar's *Veda*, but this project firmly positions her as the protagonist.

The title *Heggana Muddu* is inspired by the popular Kannada proverb "Hettavarige Heggana Muddu," instantly evoking curiosity. While the phrase is familiar, the makers clarify that the film interprets it within a contemporary and emotional context. The story explores relationships, personal identity, and self-worth, framed within a drama-thriller format.

Speaking about being the female lead for the first time, Aditi says, "Playing a strong protagonist felt important to me. I feel women need to tell their side of the story. Their experiences are as important as a male protagonist's journey." She adds that *Heggana Muddu* offered her that space.

On collaborating with the team, she says, "This is my second film, and working with a debut director was enjoyable and fulfilling. I had previously worked with Avinash on a Bengaluru song when he was a lyricist. When he approached me with this story, I trusted him because he believed deeply in the script. The story kept evolving through the process, and I was involved in shaping the character. Working with Poornachandra Mysore was equally rewarding."

With the shooting completed, the film is currently in post-production. The makers have also unveiled the title and motion poster.

Rajinikanth's next finds its director

CE FEATURES

AFTER weeks of speculations, Kamal Haasan's Raaj Kamal Films International has officially confirmed that Don filmmaker Cibi Chakravarthi will helm Rajinikanth's Thalaivar 173, in his sophomore directorial. Anirudh is reuniting with Rajinikanth once again to compose music for the project, which is all set to hit theatres on Pongal 2027.

The announcement carried a caption that reads "Every hero has a family. Every family has a hero," teasing a narrative with a strong family drama element. The much-anticipated film has been creating buzz ever since Rajinikanth and Kamal Haasan confirmed their collaboration at an event last year, but the project landed in controversy after director Sundar C, who was earlier part of the film, left the project citing "unforeseen and unavoidable circumstances". Thalaivar 173 will be backed by Kamal Haasan along with R Mahendran under their RKFI banner. However, it is unclear if Kamal and Rajinikanth will share screen space in the upcoming film.

Tara Sutaria's look in *Toxic* unveiled

CE FEATURES

Yash

THE ensemble cast of Yash's much-anticipated film *Toxic: A Fairytale for Grown-Ups*, directed by Geetu Mohandas is coming together to unveil the story of the action entertainer. Tara Sutaria, who plays a key role in the film, is set to portray Rebecca, a fierce and enigmatic character. Her poster unveiled by the makers show her weilding a gun and commanding power. She is seen in a retro look with side-swept bob hair. "Desirable and elegant, Rebecca wields power—and guns—like her birthright, she possesses an instinct for self-preservation," reads her character description, according to a press release.

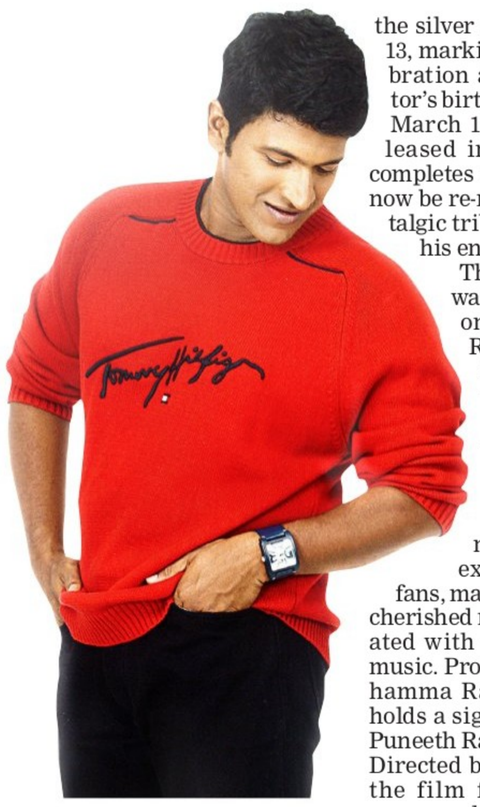
Previously, the makers had revealed posters of female leads - Kiara Advani as Nadia, Huma Qureshi as Elizabeth and Nayanthara as Ganga. The next in line is Rukmini Vasanth, whose poster is expected to arrive in the next few days.

Talking about Tara Sutaria as Rebecca, Geetu Mohandas said in a statement, "I've always felt an instinctive love to protect Tara . Perhaps because she is a guarded soul or perhaps it's the armour she's comfortable with and perhaps it doesn't need to be defined."

"I realised early on that the best way to reach her was not by pushing, not by demanding more, but by allowing her the space to simply be. That choice shaped our equation which turned out calm , deeply professional, and perfectly aligned. She observed more than she spoke. She listened more than she revealed. And I often wondered if I should guide her more closely. But in her silence, something powerful was brewing .When she finally stepped into her performance, what emerged was nothing short of breathtaking which is born from an inner understanding she carried all along. She surprised me completely, and in the most beautiful way. I have no doubt she will surprise everyone else too," she added.

Shot simultaneously in English and Kannada, with dubbed versions in Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, and Malayalam, *Toxic* aims to reach audiences on a truly global scale. *Toxic* also marks Rocking Star Yash's return after *KGF: Chapter 2*. Written by Yash and Geetu Mohandas, the film suggests a move away from familiar patterns toward a more atmospheric and character-focused story. The technical team consists of National Award-winning cinematographer Rajeev Ravi, and Ravi Basrur scores the music, with edit by Ujwal Kulkarni, and production designer handled by TP Abid. The action, meanwhile, is handled by Hollywood's JJ Perry (John Wick) and National Award-winning duo Anbariv.

Puneeth Rajkumar's *Akash* returns to theatres after 20 Years



CE FEATURES

RE-RELEASING Puneeth Rajkumar films, on the actor's birth anniversary, has now become a heartfelt tradition. In 2024, Jackie was re-released on March 15 to mark the occasion, followed by another Puneeth Rajkumar film, Appu, which was re-released in 2025. Continuing this celebration in 2026, Akash returns to theatres, offering fans a chance to relive the magic on the big screen, 20 years later. Akash is all set to return to the silver screen on March 13, marking a special celebration ahead of the actor's birth anniversary on March 17. Originally released in 2005, the film completes 20 years and will now be re-released as a nostalgic tribute to Appu and his enduring legacy.

The announcement was officially shared on social media by Raghavendra Rajkumar and Ashwini Puneeth Rajkumar, who unveiled a special poster confirming the re-release. The news has sparked excitement among fans, many of whom have cherished memories associated with the film and its music. Produced by Parvathamma Rajkumar, Akash holds a significant place in Puneeth Rajkumar's career. Directed by Mahesh Babu, the film featured music composed by RP Patnaik, with its soundtrack becoming a major highlight upon release. One song in particular, Neene Neene Nanagella Neene, sung by Kunal Ganjawala, continues to enjoy immense popularity even today.

In Akash, Puneeth Rajkumar played the titular role, while Ramya starred opposite him as Nandini. The on-screen chemistry between the pair, combined with melodious songs and an emotionally engaging narrative, helped the film emerge as a super hit during its original run.

A still from the film

Seat Edge locks release date

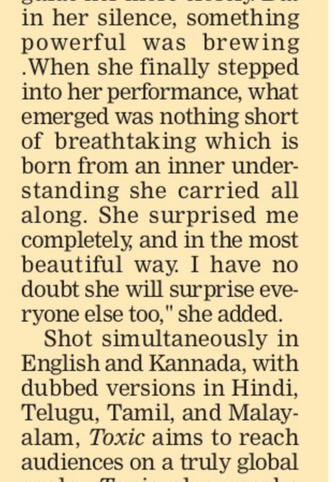
CE FEATURES

SEAT Edge has officially locked its theatrical release for January 30. According to the makers, the upcoming film is a blend of comedy, horror, and suspense. Produced under the NR Cinema Productions banner, the film is backed by Giridhara T Vasanthapura, with Sujatha Giridhara serving as the co-producer. Siddu Moolimani plays the lead role in Seat Edge, marking his next as the lead after Love U Muddu. With the upcoming project, Siddu returns in a completely different space, frontlining a genre-bending entertainer centred around a modern-day YouTube vlogger.

The film, which marks the directorial debut of Chethan Shetty, follows the story of a vlogger who ventures into ghost hunting, only to find himself caught in a series of unexpected and spine-chilling situations. The narrative unfolds as a comedy horror thriller, combining humour with eerie moments and suspense, making it a unique addition to the genre. *Seat Edge* stars Raviksha Shetty as the female lead, alongside a strong supporting cast that includes Raaghu Ramanakoppa, Girish Shivanna, Mimicry Gopi, Lakshmi Siddaiah, Kiran Nayak, Puneeth Babu, Teju Ponappa, and Manmohan Rai.

Shot over 45 days across Bengaluru, Mysuru, Shivamogga, and Kudremukha, the film has Deepak Kumar JK as the cinematographer, Nagendra K Ujjani as the editor, Akash Parva as the composer, and Raghu RJ as the choreographer. So far, the makers have released two songs—Sari Heluve Jagakke sung by Armaan Malik and Hango Hingo by Tipu—along with a teaser presented as a vlog titled Vlog-1: The Loop. A new song, Lifeuu Yako Khali Khali, penned by Nagarjun Sharma and sung by Siddhartha Belmannu, is set to release on January 29, a day ahead of the film's theatrical debut.

Assassin's *Creed* series adds new cast member



CE FEATURES

NETFLIX HAS announced that its Assassin's *Creed* series, has expanded its cast with Tanzyn Crawford. The upcoming series will be directed by Johan Renck, the Emmy award-winning director of Chernobyl.

Roberto Patino and David Weiner are the creators and showrunners of Assassin's *Creed*. "We've been fans of Assassin's *Creed* since its release in 2007. Every day we work on this show, we come away excited and humbled by the possibilities that Assassin's *Creed* opens to us. Beneath the scope, the spectacle, the parkour, and the thrills is a baseline for the most essential kind of human story — about people searching for purpose, struggling with questions of identity and destiny and faith. It is about power and violence and sex and greed and vengeance," said the creators.

The cast of the series also includes Toby Wallace, Lola Petticrew, Zachary Hart, and Laura Marcus. Meanwhile, Crawford will also be seen in the upcoming *Game of Thrones* spinoff, *A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms*. The series is premiering on JioHotstar, on January 19.

Gandhi Talks to finally hit theatres

CE FEATURES

AFTER a long wait, Vijay Sethupathi's upcoming silent film *Gandhi Talks* has locked a theatrical release date. Directed by Kishor Pandurang Belekar, best-known for helming Marathi films such as Sa Sascha and Yeda, the film will be released on January 30, coinciding with Mahatma Gandhi's death anniversary. The film has music composed by AR Rahman.

Announced in 2021, the film went on floors in 2022. *Gandhi Talks* was the first silent film played at the 23rd International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa in 2023. The film also stars Arvind Swami, Aditi Rao Hydari, and Marathi actor Siddharth Jadhav. According to the official synopsis, the film shows a young, unemployed graduate named Mahadev. His struggle to land a job through any means possible has him cross paths with a businessman and petty thief. The film also reportedly draws references from Hindu mythology and the story of Samudra Manthan.

House of the Dragon to end with season 4

CE FEATURES

AS *House of The Dragon* is awaiting the release of its third season, it has already been renewed for season 4. However, showrunner Ryan Condal has recently confirmed that the popular prequel series to Game of Thrones will conclude its story with the fourth and final season. While a release date is yet to be announced, *HOTD* season 3 is set to stream in June. Another spinoff from the world of Game of Thrones, titled *A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms: The Hedge Knight*, is set to release on January 18. The prequel is based on George RR Martin's *Tales of Dunk* and Egg fantasy novellas and takes place roughly 90 years before Game of Thrones.